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Mahabharata-38

THE KURUS ROUTED

DILIP KADAM
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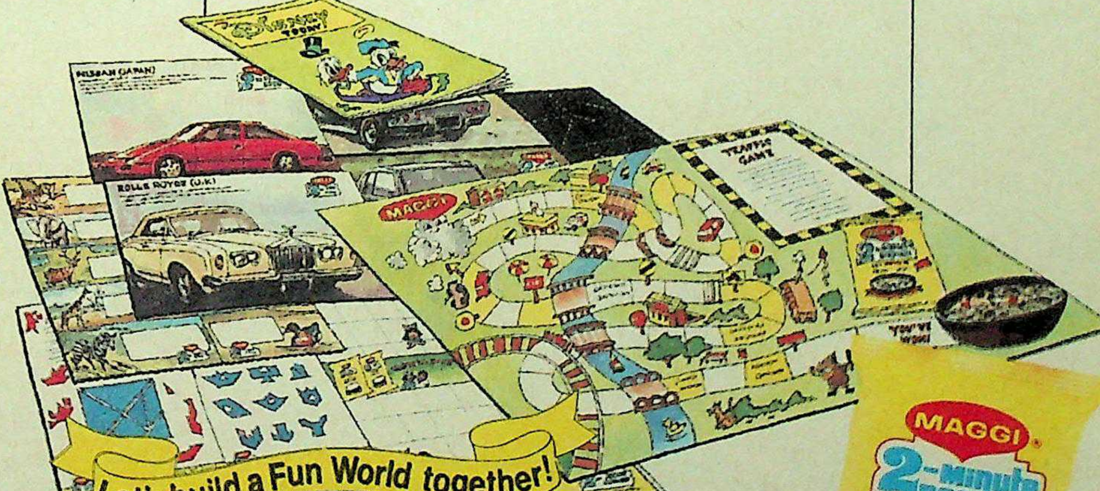
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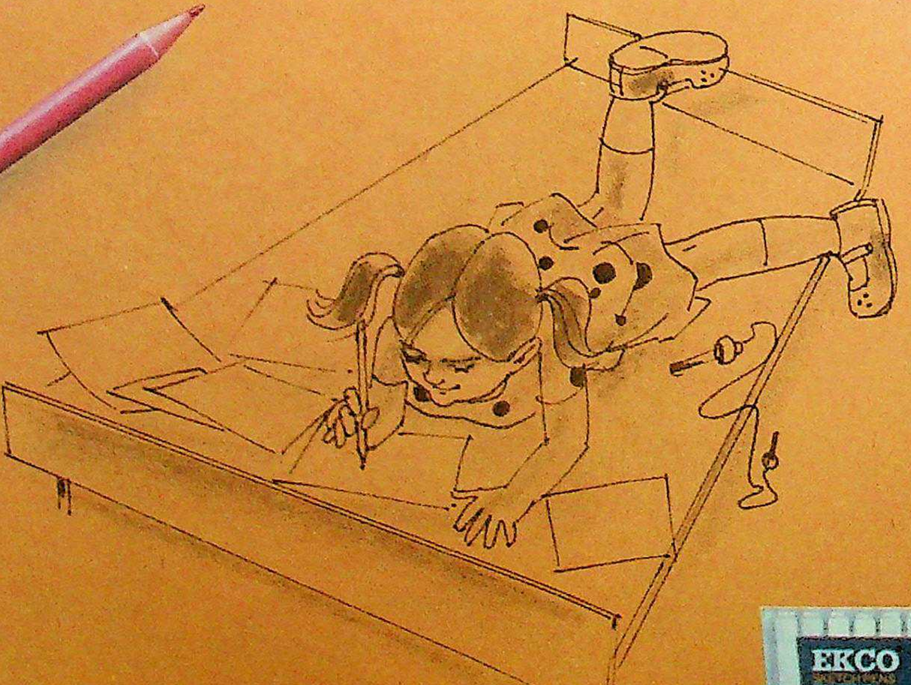

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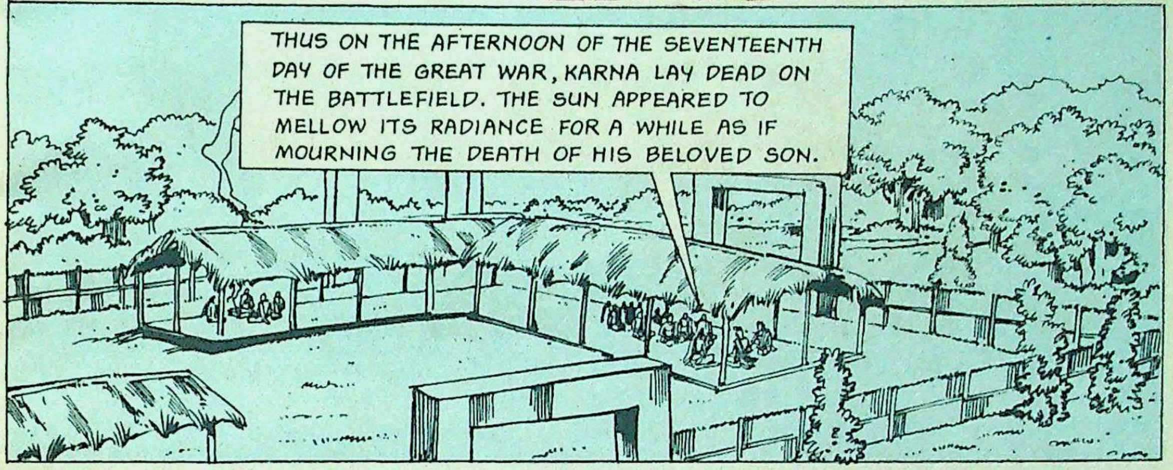
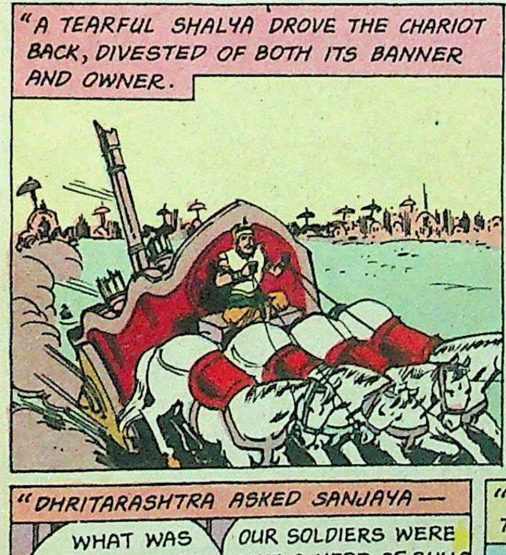
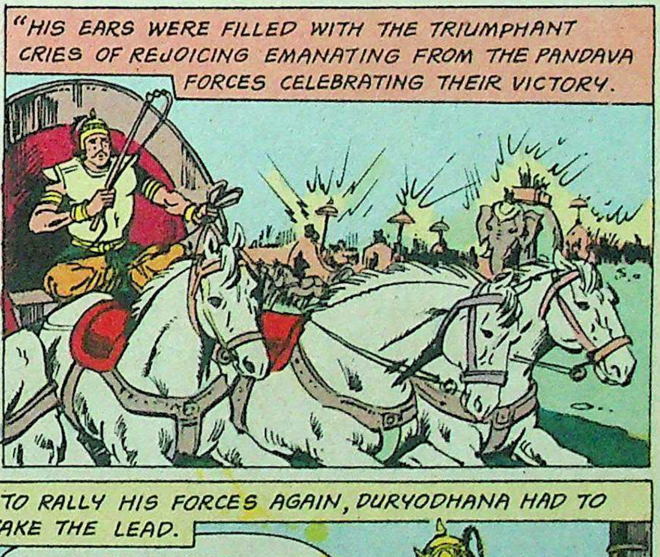
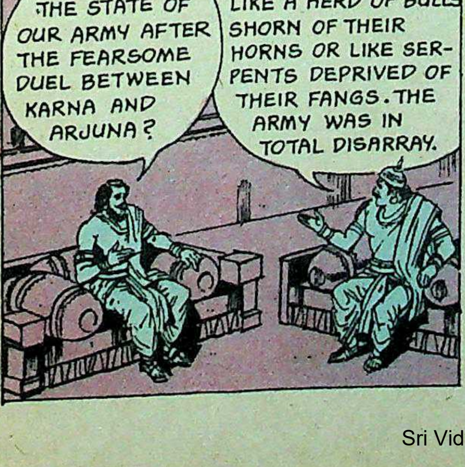
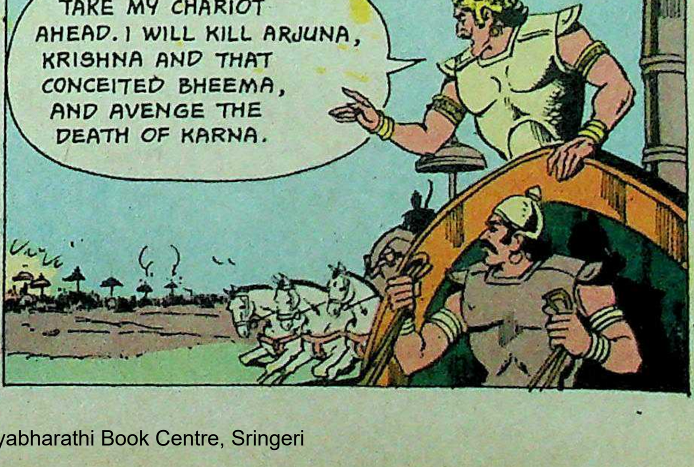
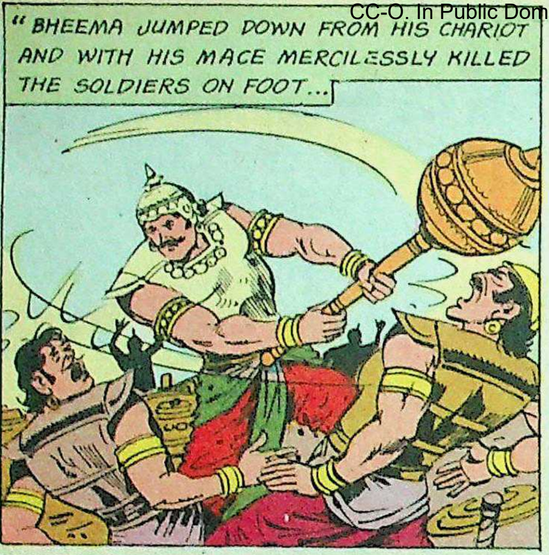

THUS ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE GREAT WAR, KARNA LAY DEAD ON THE BATTLEFIELD. THE SUN APPEARED TO MELLOW ITS RADIANCE FOR A WHILE AS IF MOURNING THE DEATH OF HIS BELOVED SON.

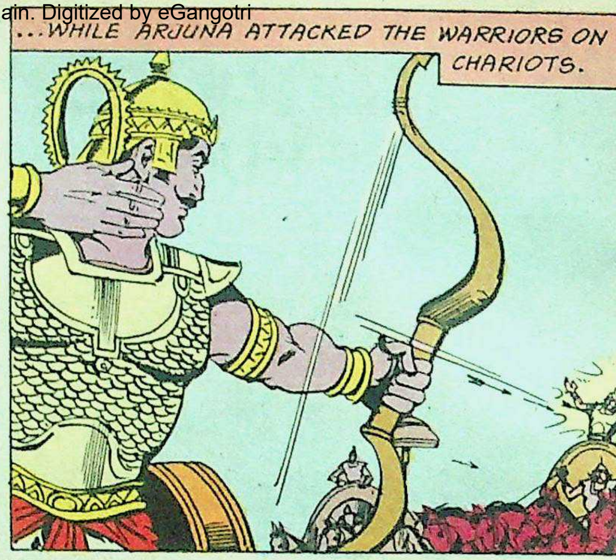

"A TEARFUL SHALYA DROVE THE CHARIOT BACK, DIVESTED OF BOTH ITS BANNER AND OWNER.

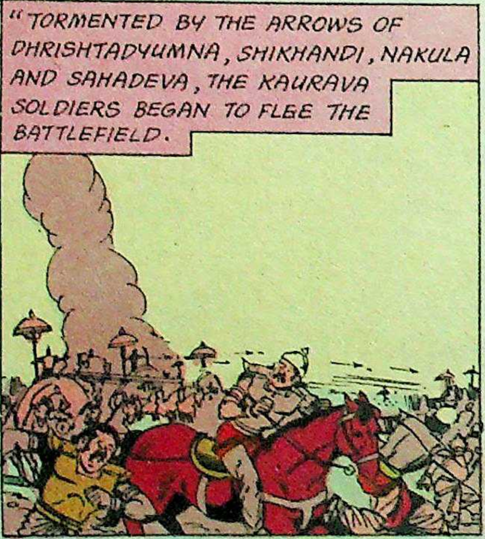

"HIS EARS WERE FILLED WITH THE TRIUMPHANT CRIES OF REJOICING EMANATING FROM THE PANDAVA FORCES CELEBRATING THEIR VICTORY.

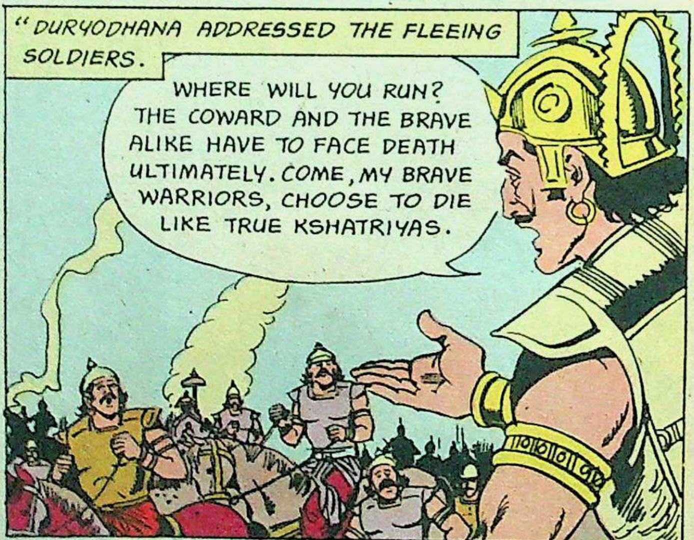

"DHRITARASHTRA ASKED SANJAYA —
WHAT WAS THE STATE OF OUR ARMY AFTER THE FEARSOME DUEL BETWEEN KARNA AND ARJUNA?
OUR SOLDIERS WERE LIKE A HERD OF BULLS SHORN OF THEIR HORNS OR LIKE SERPENTS DEPRIVED OF THEIR FANGS. THE ARMY WAS IN TOTAL DISARRAY.

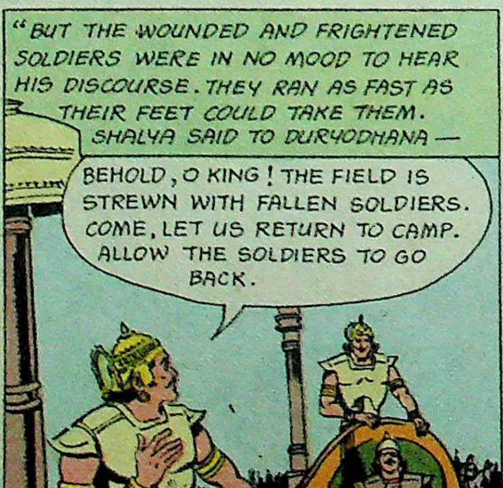

"TO RALLY HIS FORCES AGAIN, DURYODHANA HAD TO TAKE THE LEAD.
TAKE MY CHARIOT AHEAD. I WILL KILL ARJUNA, KRISHNA AND THAT CONCEITED BHEEMA, AND AVENGE THE DEATH OF KARNA.

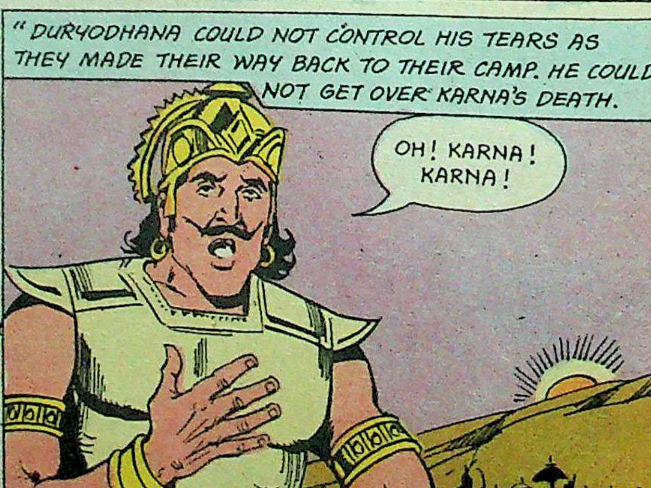

"BHEEMA JUMPED DOWN FROM HIS CHARIOT AND WITH HIS MACE MERCILESSLY KILLED THE SOLDIERS ON FOOT...

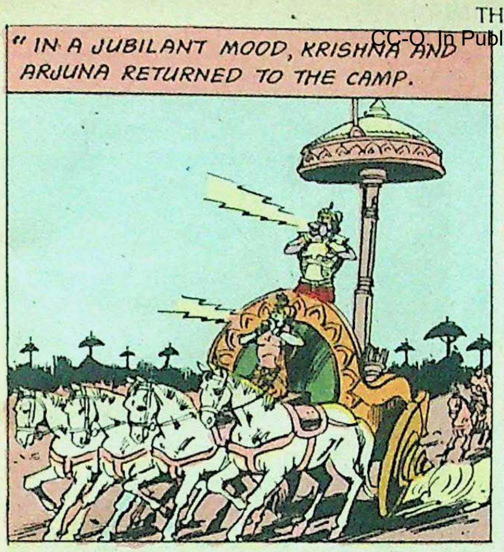

...WHILE ARJUNA ATTACKED THE WARRIORS ON CHARIOTS.

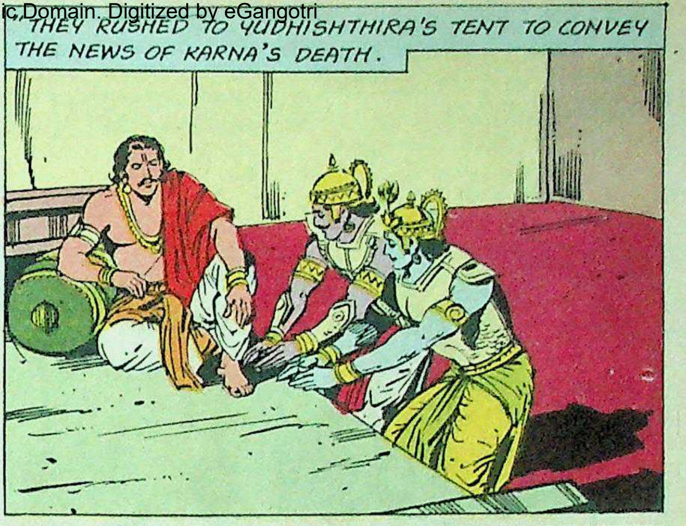

"TORMENTED BY THE ARROWS OF DHRISHTADYUMNA, SHIKHANDI, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA, THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS BEGAN TO FLEE THE BATTLEFIELD.

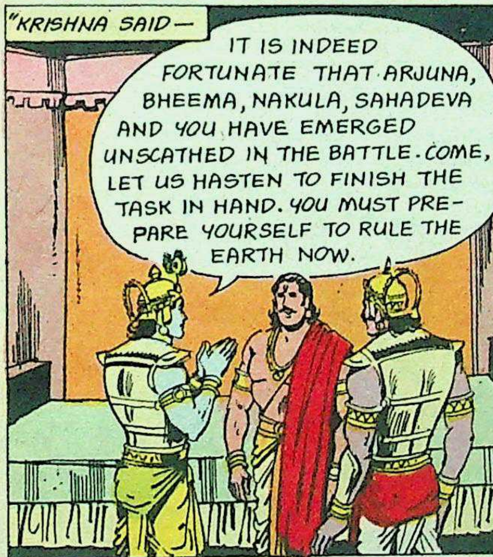

"DURYODHANA ADDRESSED THE FLEEING SOLDIERS.
WHERE WILL YOU RUN? THE COWARD AND THE BRAVE ALIKE HAVE TO FACE DEATH ULTIMATELY. COME, MY BRAVE WARRIORS, CHOOSE TO DIE LIKE TRUE KSHATRIYAS.

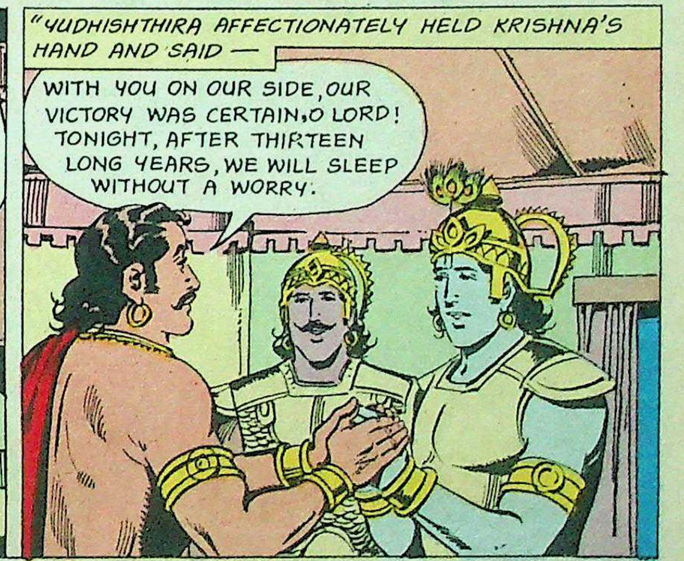

"BUT THE WOUNDED AND FRIGHTENED SOLDIERS WERE IN NO MOOD TO HEAR HIS DISCOURSE. THEY RAN AS FAST AS THEIR FEET COULD TAKE THEM. SHALYA SAID TO DURYODHANA —
BEHOLD, O KING! THE FIELD IS STREWN WITH FALLEN SOLDIERS. COME, LET US RETURN TO CAMP. ALLOW THE SOLDIERS TO GO BACK.

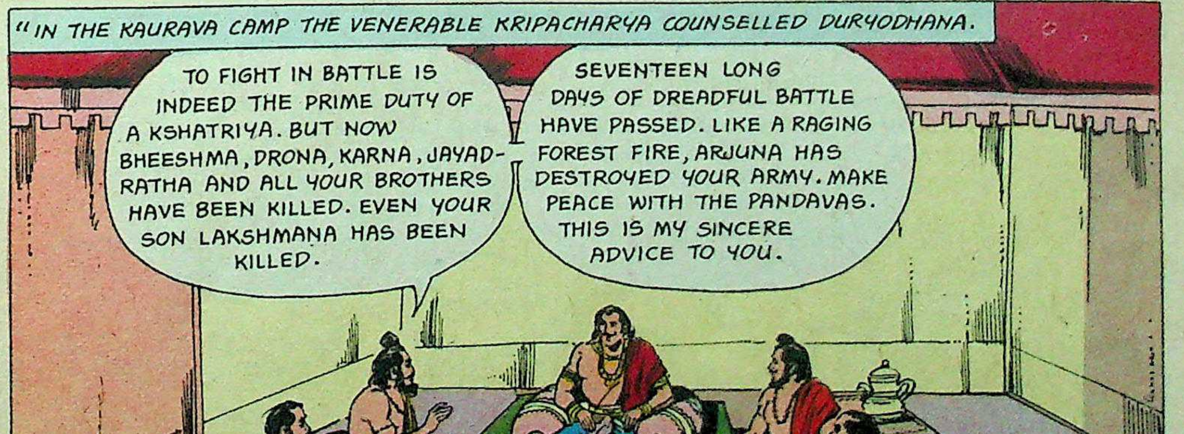

"DURYODHANA COULD NOT CONTROL HIS TEARS AS THEY MADE THEIR WAY BACK TO THEIR CAMP. HE COULD NOT GET OVER KARNA'S DEATH.
OH! KARNA! KARNA!

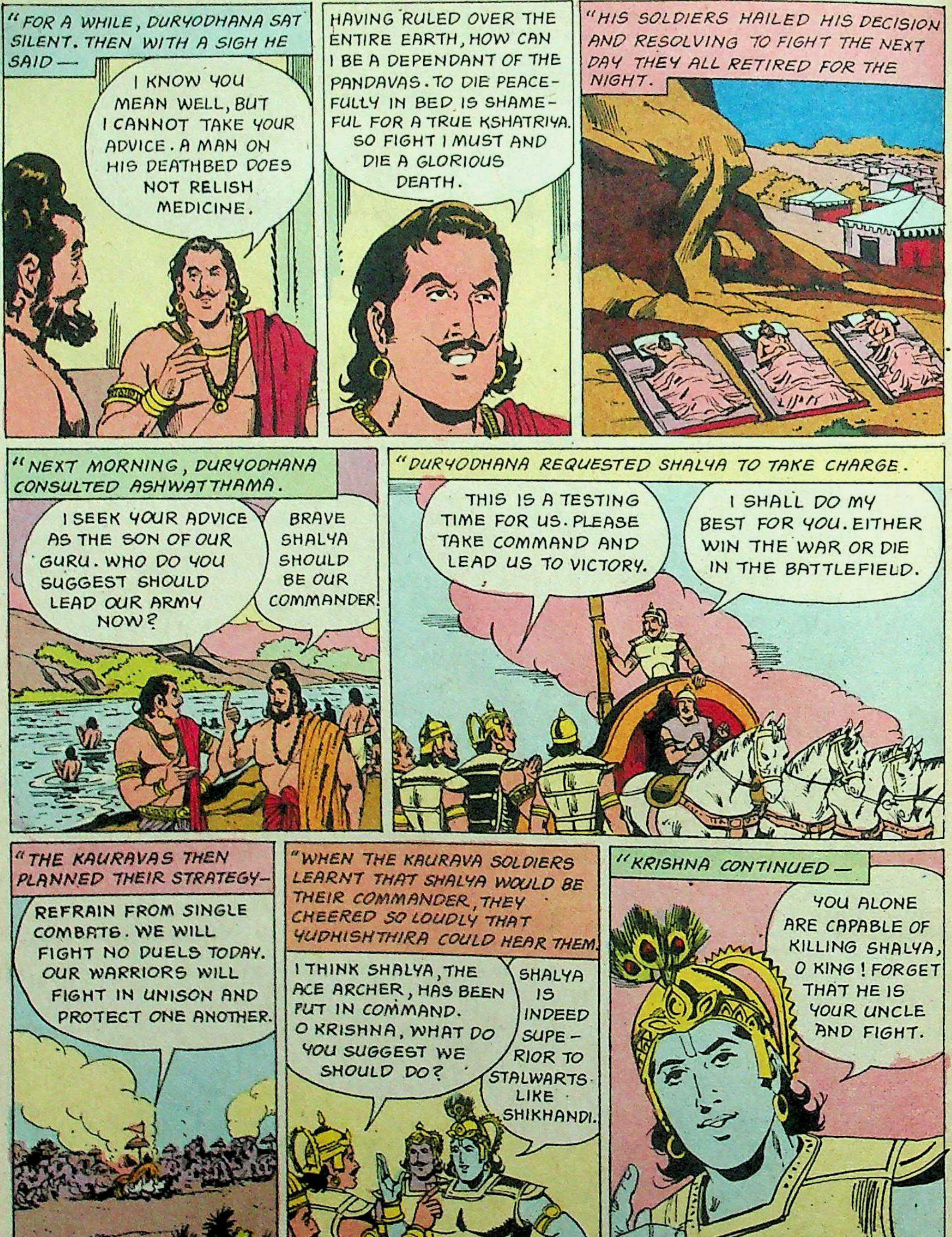

"IN A JUBILANT MOOD, KRISHNA AND ARJUNA RETURNED TO THE CAMP.

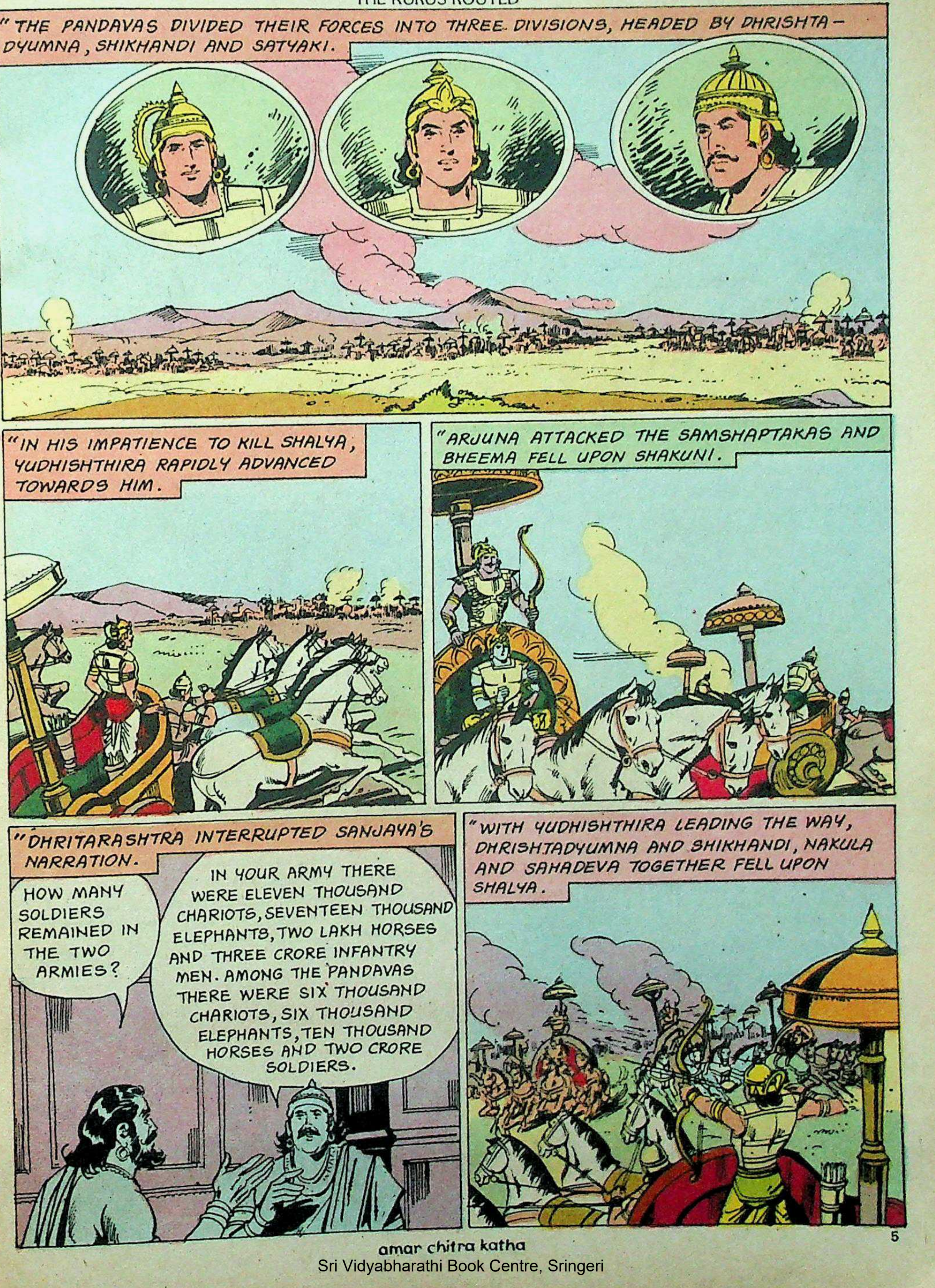

THEY RUSHED TO YUDHISHTHIRA'S TENT TO CONVEY THE NEWS OF KARNA'S DEATH.

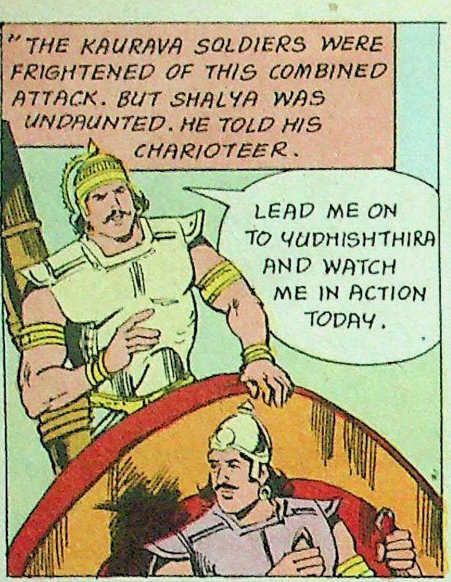

"KRISHNA SAID—
IT IS INDEED FORTUNATE THAT ARJUNA, BHEEMA, NAKULA, SAHADEVA AND YOU HAVE EMERGED UNSCATHED IN THE BATTLE. COME, LET US HASTEN TO FINISH THE TASK IN HAND. YOU MUST PREPARE YOURSELF TO RULE THE EARTH NOW.

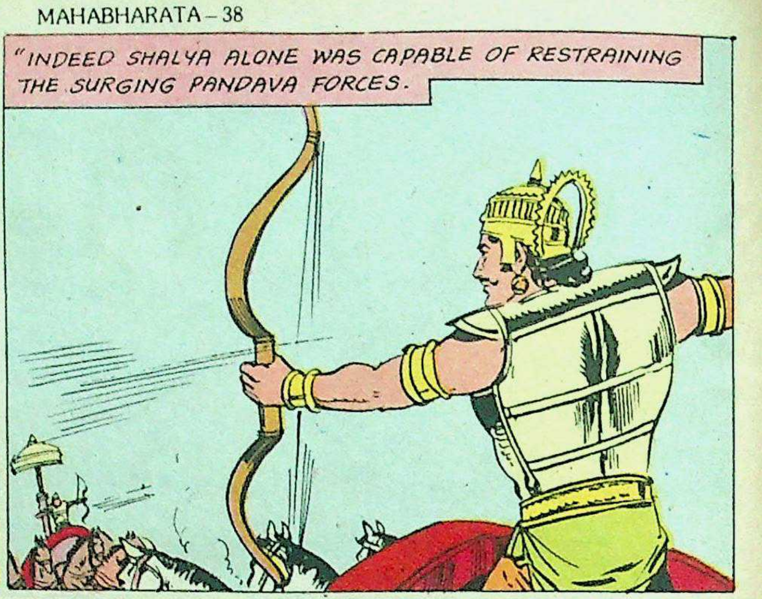

"YUDHISHTHIRA AFFECTIONATELY HELD KRISHNA'S HAND AND SAID—
WITH YOU ON OUR SIDE, OUR VICTORY WAS CERTAIN, O LORD! TONIGHT, AFTER THIRTEEN LONG YEARS, WE WILL SLEEP WITHOUT A WORRY.

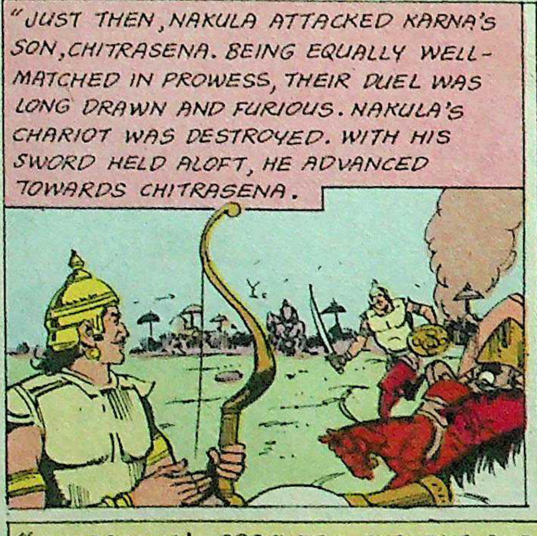

"IN THE KAURAVA CAMP THE VENERABLE KRIPACHARYA COUNSELLED DURYODHANA.
TO FIGHT IN BATTLE IS INDEED THE PRIME DUTY OF A KSHATRIYA. BUT NOW BHEESHMA, DRONA, KARNA, JAYADRATHA AND ALL YOUR BROTHERS HAVE BEEN KILLED. EVEN YOUR SON LAKSHMANA HAS BEEN KILLED.
SEVENTEEN LONG DAYS OF DREADFUL BATTLE HAVE PASSED. LIKE A RAGING FOREST FIRE, ARJUNA HAS DESTROYED YOUR ARMY. MAKE PEACE WITH THE PANDAVAS. THIS IS MY SINCERE ADVICE TO YOU.

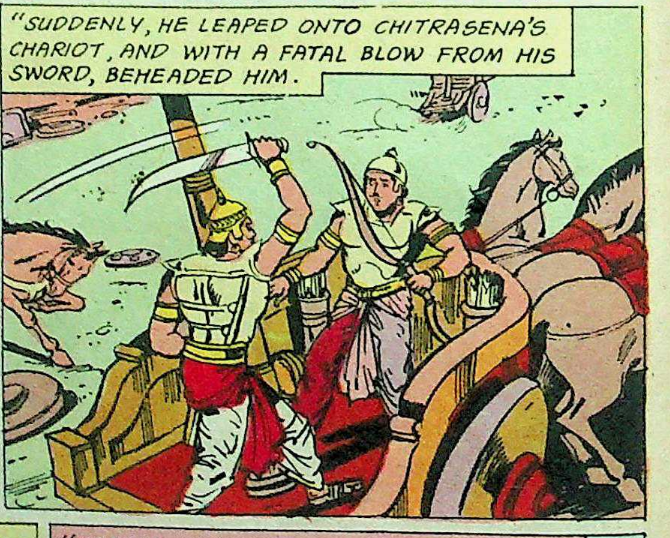

"FOR A WHILE, DURYODHANA SAT SILENT. THEN WITH A SIGH HE SAID —
I KNOW YOU MEAN WELL, BUT I CANNOT TAKE YOUR ADVICE. A MAN ON HIS DEATHBED DOES NOT RELISH MEDICINE.
HAVING RULED OVER THE ENTIRE EARTH, HOW CAN I BE A DEPENDANT OF THE PANDAVAS. TO DIE PEACEFULLY IN BED IS SHAMEFUL FOR A TRUE KSHATRIYA. SO FIGHT I MUST AND DIE A GLORIOUS DEATH.
"HIS SOLDIERS HAILED HIS DECISION AND RESOLVING TO FIGHT THE NEXT DAY THEY ALL RETIRED FOR THE NIGHT.
"NEXT MORNING, DURYODHANA CONSULTED ASHWATTHAMA.
I SEEK YOUR ADVICE AS THE SON OF OUR GURU. WHO DO YOU SUGGEST SHOULD LEAD OUR ARMY NOW?
BRAVE SHALYA SHOULD BE OUR COMMANDER!
"DURYODHANA REQUESTED SHALYA TO TAKE CHARGE.
THIS IS A TESTING TIME FOR US. PLEASE TAKE COMMAND AND LEAD US TO VICTORY.
I SHALL DO MY BEST FOR YOU. EITHER WIN THE WAR OR DIE IN THE BATTLEFIELD.
"THE KAURAVAS THEN PLANNED THEIR STRATEGY—
REFRAIN FROM SINGLE COMBATS. WE WILL FIGHT NO DUELS TODAY. OUR WARRIORS WILL FIGHT IN UNISON AND PROTECT ONE ANOTHER.
"WHEN THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS LEARNT THAT SHALYA WOULD BE THEIR COMMANDER, THEY CHEERED SO LOUDLY THAT YUDHISHTHIRA COULD HEAR THEM.
I THINK SHALYA, THE ACE ARCHER, HAS BEEN PUT IN COMMAND. O KRISHNA, WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE SHOULD DO?
SHALYA IS INDEED SUPERIOR TO STALWARTS LIKE SHIKHANDI.
"KRISHNA CONTINUED —
YOU ALONE ARE CAPABLE OF KILLING SHALYA, O KING! FORGET THAT HE IS YOUR UNCLE AND FIGHT.
amar chitra katha

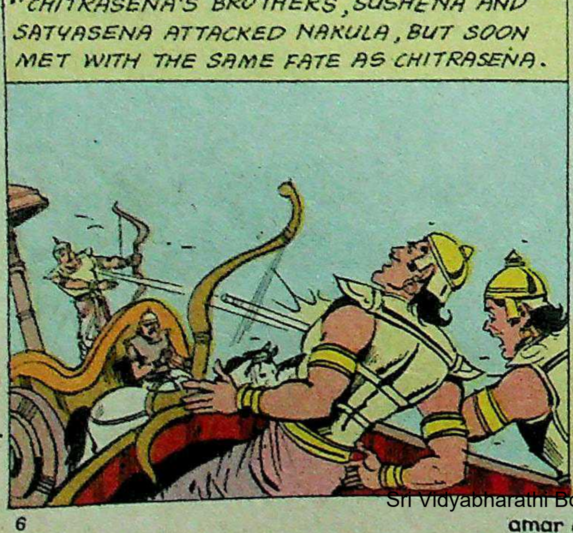

"THE PANDAVAS DIVIDED THEIR FORCES INTO THREE DIVISIONS, HEADED BY DHRISHTADYUMNA, SHIKHANDI AND SATYAKI.
"IN HIS IMPATIENCE TO KILL SHALYA, YUDHISHTHIRA RAPIDLY ADVANCED TOWARDS HIM.
"ARJUNA ATTACKED THE SAMSHAPTAKAS AND BHEEMA FELL UPON SHAKUNI.
"DHRITARASHTRA INTERRUPTED SANJAYA'S NARRATION.
HOW MANY SOLDIERS REMAINED IN THE TWO ARMIES?
IN YOUR ARMY THERE WERE ELEVEN THOUSAND CHARIOTS, SEVENTEEN THOUSAND ELEPHANTS, TWO LAKH HORSES AND THREE CRORE INFANTRY MEN. AMONG THE PANDAVAS THERE WERE SIX THOUSAND CHARIOTS, SIX THOUSAND ELEPHANTS, TEN THOUSAND HORSES AND TWO CRORE SOLDIERS.
"WITH YUDHISHTHIRA LEADING THE WAY, DHRISHTADYUMNA AND SHIKHANDI, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA TOGETHER FELL UPON SHALYA.

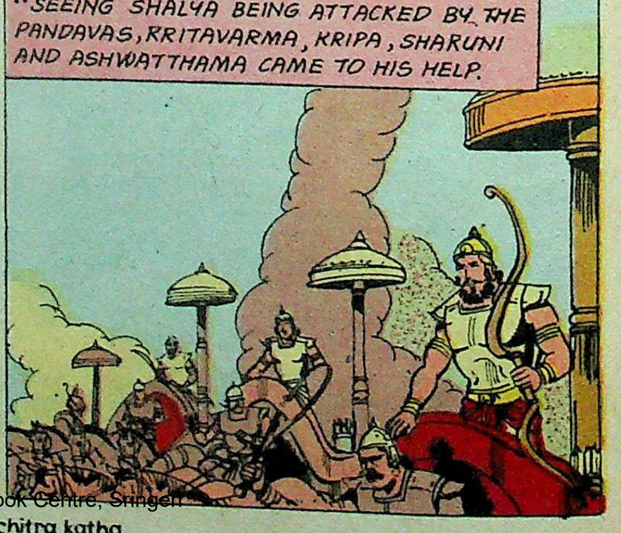

"THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE FRIGHTENED OF THIS COMBINED ATTACK. BUT SHALYA WAS UNDAUNTED. HE TOLD HIS CHARIOTEER.
LEAD ME ON TO YUDHISHTHIRA AND WATCH ME IN ACTION TODAY.

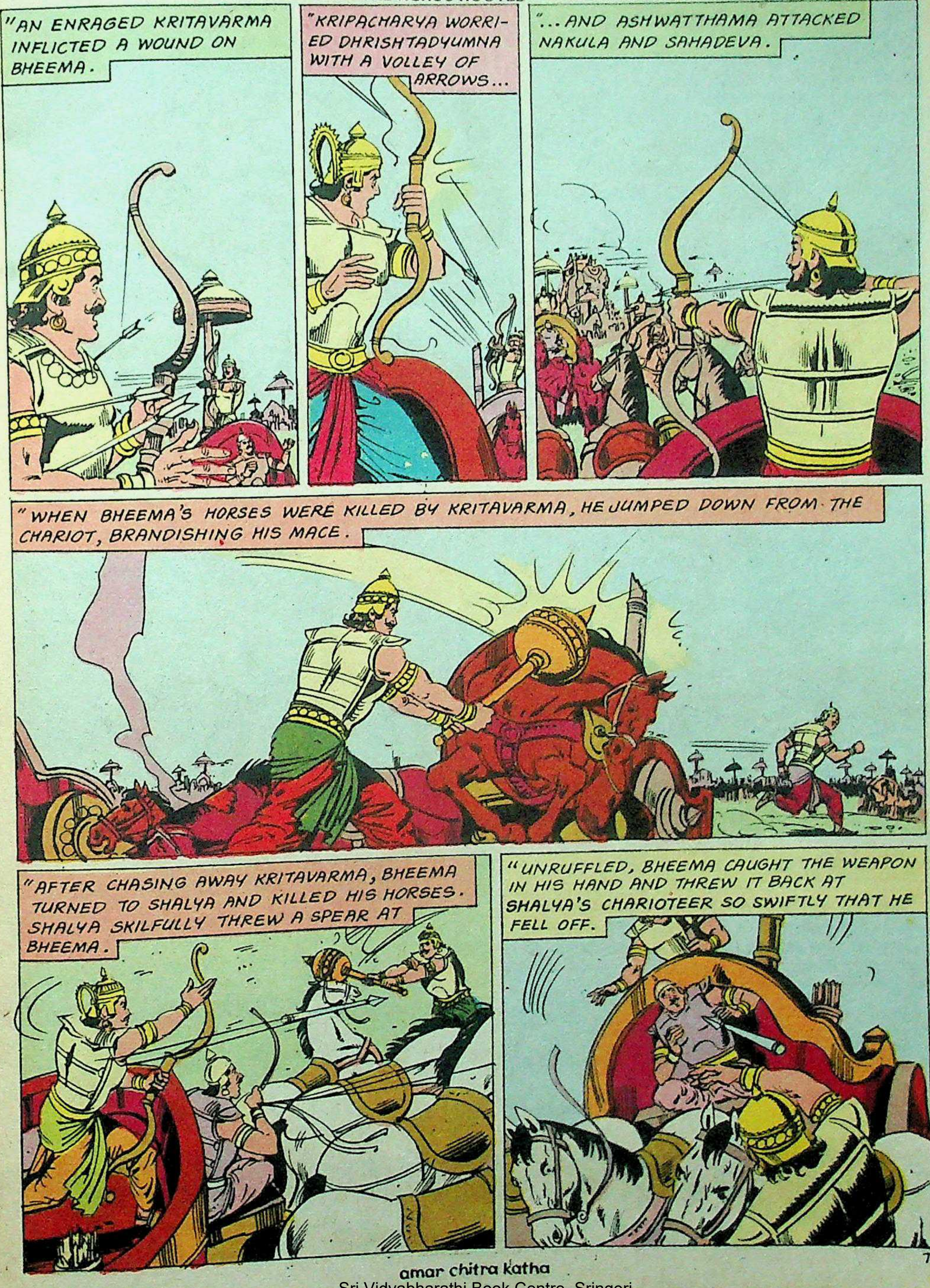

"INDEED SHALYA ALONE WAS CAPABLE OF RESTRAINING THE SURGING PANDAVA FORCES.

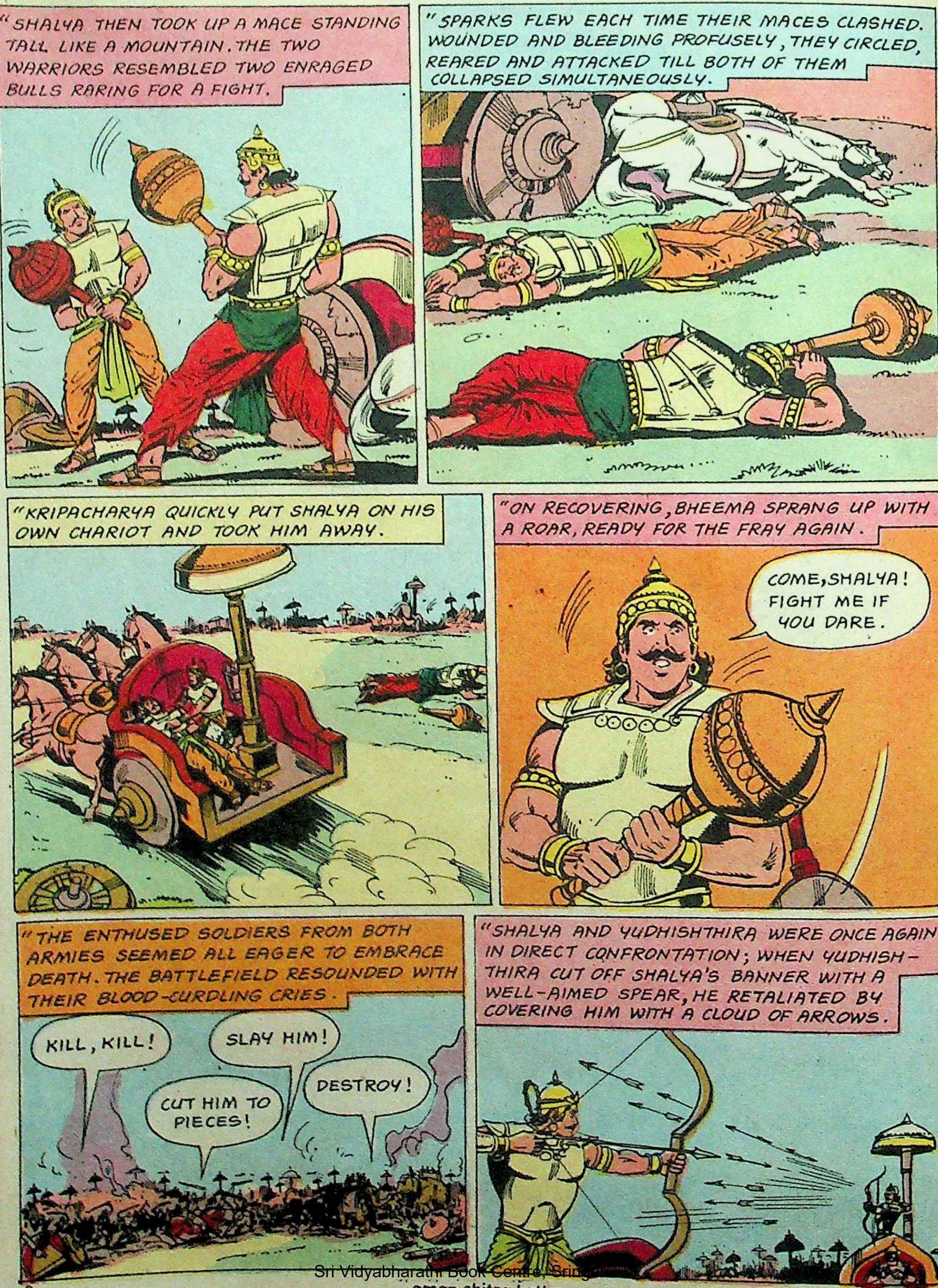

"JUST THEN, NAKULA ATTACKED KARNA'S SON, CHITRASENA. BEING EQUALLY WELL-MATCHED IN PROWESS, THEIR DUEL WAS LONG DRAWN AND FURIOUS. NAKULA'S CHARIOT WAS DESTROYED. WITH HIS SWORD HELD ALOFT, HE ADVANCED TOWARDS CHITRASENA.

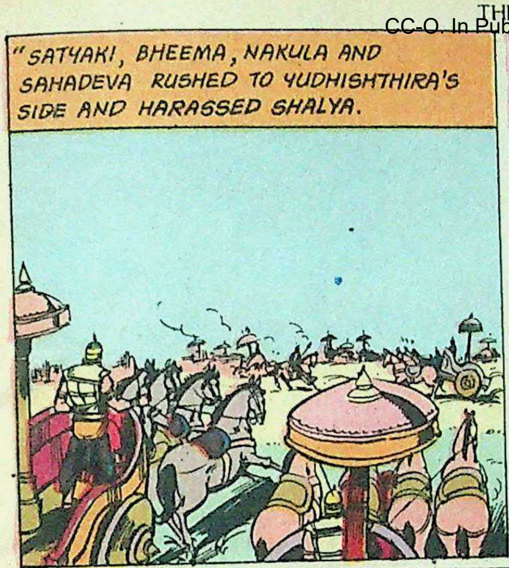

"SUDDENLY, HE LEAPED ONTO CHITRASENA'S CHARIOT, AND WITH A FATAL BLOW FROM HIS SWORD, BEHEADED HIM.

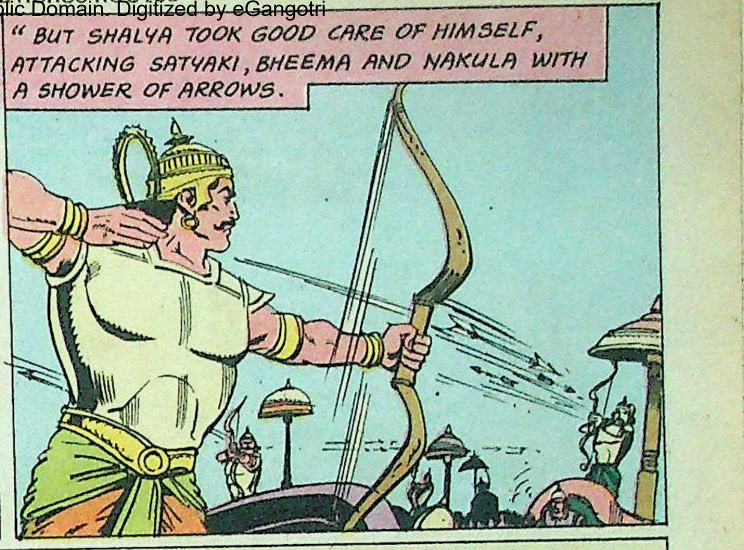

"CHITRASENA'S BROTHERS, SUSHENA AND SATYASENA ATTACKED NAKULA, BUT SOON MET WITH THE SAME FATE AS CHITRASENA.

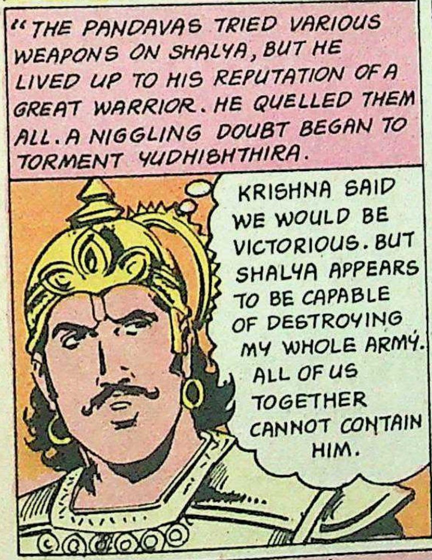

"SEEING SHALYA BEING ATTACKED BY THE PANDAVAS, KRITAVARMA, KRIPA, SHARUNI AND ASHWATTHAMA CAME TO HIS HELP.


"AN ENRAGED KRITAVARMA INFLICTED A WOUND ON BHEEMA.
"KRIPACHARYA WORRIED DHRISHTADYUMNA WITH A VOLLEY OF ARROWS...
"...AND ASHWATTHAMA ATTACKED NAKULA AND SAHADEVA.
"WHEN BHEEMA'S HORSES WERE KILLED BY KRITAVARMA, HE JUMPED DOWN FROM THE CHARIOT, BRANDISHING HIS MACE.
"AFTER CHASING AWAY KRITAVARMA, BHEEMA TURNED TO SHALYA AND KILLED HIS HORSES. SHALYA SKILFULLY THREW A SPEAR AT BHEEMA.
"UNRUFFLED, BHEEMA CAUGHT THE WEAPON IN HIS HAND AND THREW IT BACK AT SHALYA'S CHARIOTEER SO SWIFTLY THAT HE FELL OFF.

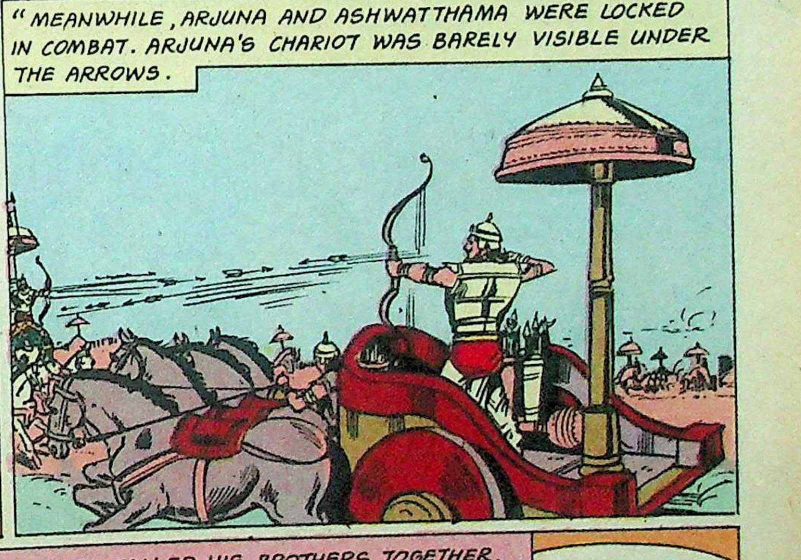

"SHALYA THEN TOOK UP A MACE STANDING TALL LIKE A MOUNTAIN. THE TWO WARRIORS RESEMBLED TWO ENRAGED BULLS RARING FOR A FIGHT.
"SPARKS FLEW EACH TIME THEIR MACES CLASHED. WOUNDED AND BLEEDING PROFUSELY, THEY CIRCLED, REARED AND ATTACKED TILL BOTH OF THEM COLLAPSED SIMULTANEOUSLY.
"KRIPACHARYA QUICKLY PUT SHALYA ON HIS OWN CHARIOT AND TOOK HIM AWAY.
"ON RECOVERING, BHEEMA SPRANG UP WITH A ROAR, READY FOR THE FRAY AGAIN.
COME, SHALYA! FIGHT ME IF YOU DARE.
"THE ENTHUSED SOLDIERS FROM BOTH ARMIES SEEMED ALL EAGER TO EMBRACE DEATH. THE BATTLEFIELD RESOUNDED WITH THEIR BLOOD-CURDLING CRIES.
KILL, KILL!
SLAY HIM!
CUT HIM TO PIECES!
DESTROY!
"SHALYA AND YUDHISHTHIRA WERE ONCE AGAIN IN DIRECT CONFRONTATION; WHEN YUDHISHTHIRA CUT OFF SHALYA'S BANNER WITH A WELL-AIMED SPEAR, HE RETALIATED BY COVERING HIM WITH A CLOUD OF ARROWS.


"SATYAKI, BHEEMA, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA RUSHED TO YUDHISHTHIRA'S SIDE AND HARASSED SHALYA.

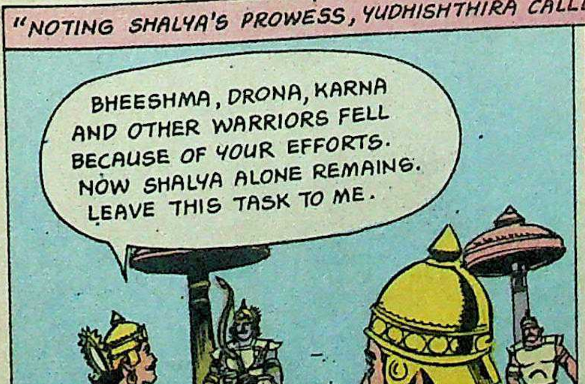

"BUT SHALYA TOOK GOOD CARE OF HIMSELF, ATTACKING SATYAKI, BHEEMA AND NAKULA WITH A SHOWER OF ARROWS.

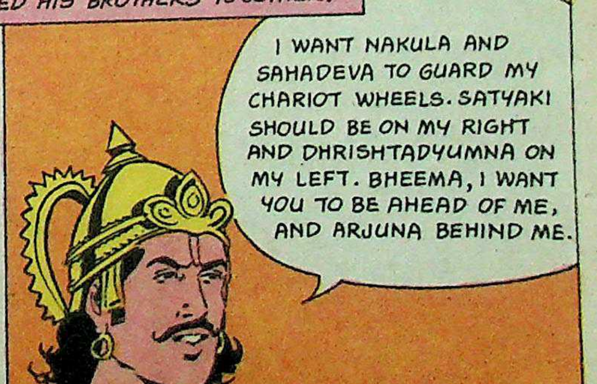

"THE PANDAVAS TRIED VARIOUS WEAPONS ON SHALYA, BUT HE LIVED UP TO HIS REPUTATION OF A GREAT WARRIOR. HE QUELLED THEM ALL. A NIGGLING DOUBT BEGAN TO TORMENT YUDHISHTHIRA.

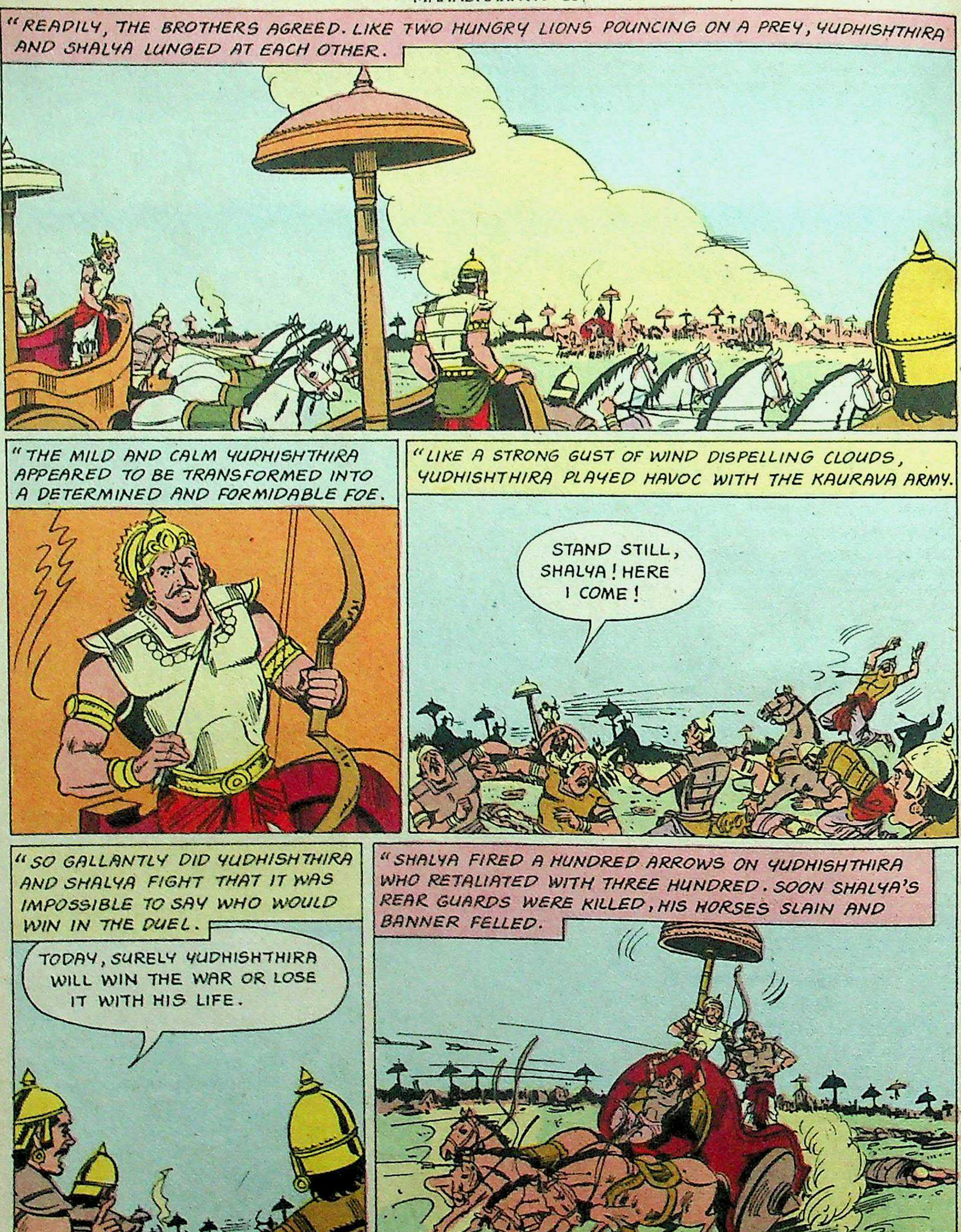
KRISHNA SAID WE WOULD BE VICTORIOUS. BUT SHALYA APPEARS TO BE CAPABLE OF DESTROYING MY WHOLE ARMY. ALL OF US TOGETHER CANNOT CONTAIN HIM.


"MEANWHILE, ARJUNA AND ASHWATTHAMA WERE LOCKED IN COMBAT. ARJUNA'S CHARIOT WAS BARELY VISIBLE UNDER THE ARROWS.

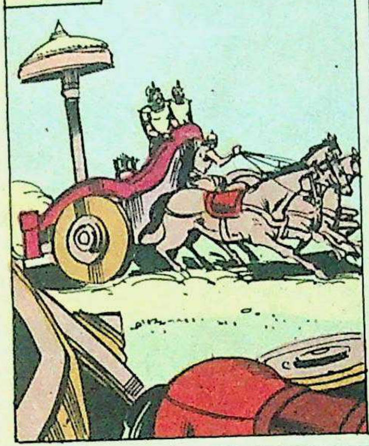
"NOTING SHALYA'S PROWESS, YUDHISHTHIRA CALLED HIS BROTHERS TOGETHER.


BHEESHMA, DRONA, KARNA AND OTHER WARRIORS FELL BECAUSE OF YOUR EFFORTS. NOW SHALYA ALONE REMAINS. LEAVE THIS TASK TO ME.

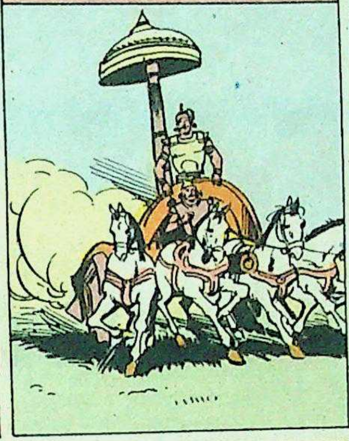

I WANT NAKULA AND SAHADEVA TO GUARD MY CHARIOT WHEELS. SATYAKI SHOULD BE ON MY RIGHT AND DHRISHTADYUMNA ON MY LEFT. BHEEMA, I WANT YOU TO BE AHEAD OF ME, AND ARJUNA BEHIND ME.


"READILY, THE BROTHERS AGREED. LIKE TWO HUNGRY LIONS POUNCING ON A PREY, YUDHISHTHIRA AND SHALYA LUNGED AT EACH OTHER.
"THE MILD AND CALM YUDHISHTHIRA APPEARED TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO A DETERMINED AND FORMIDABLE FOE.
"LIKE A STRONG GUST OF WIND DISPELLING CLOUDS, YUDHISHTHIRA PLAYED HAVOC WITH THE KAURAVA ARMY.
STAND STILL, SHALYA! HERE I COME!
"SO GALLANTLY DID YUDHISHTHIRA AND SHALYA FIGHT THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WHO WOULD WIN IN THE DUEL.
TODAY, SURELY YUDHISHTHIRA WILL WIN THE WAR OR LOSE IT WITH HIS LIFE.
"SHALYA FIRED A HUNDRED ARROWS ON YUDHISHTHIRA WHO RETALIATED WITH THREE HUNDRED. SOON SHALYA'S REAR GUARDS WERE KILLED, HIS HORSES SLAIN AND BANNER FELLED.

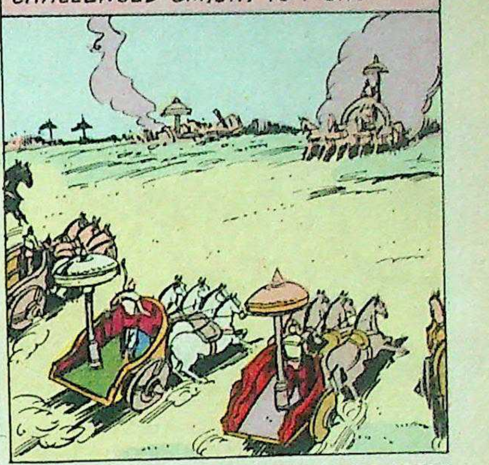
"NOTING SHALYA'S PLIGHT, ASHWATTHAMA QUICKLY PUT HIM ON HIS OWN CHARIOT AND CARRIED HIM AWAY.



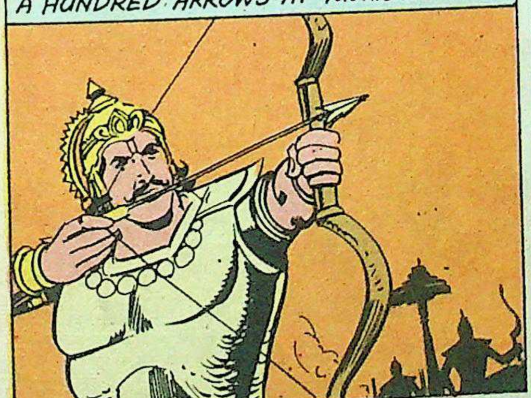
"YUDHISHTHIRA ROARED LIKE A LION AS HE SAW HIS ADVERSARY GETTING AWAY. BUT SOON SHALYA WAS BACK ON ANOTHER CHARIOT.



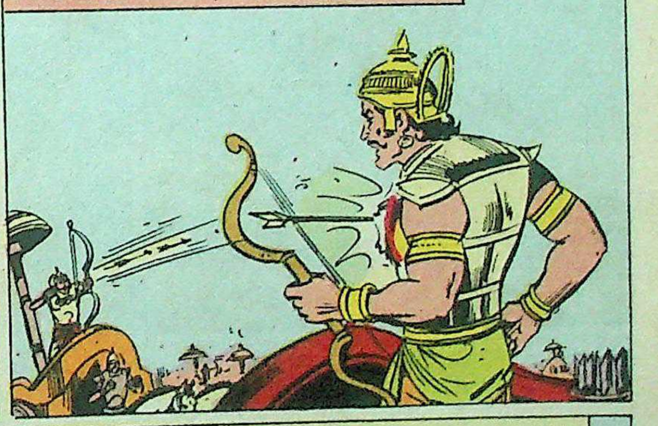
"BHEEMA, SATYAKI, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA FORMED A PROTECTIVE RING ROUND YUDHISHTHIRA AND CHALLENGED SHALYA TO FIGHT.



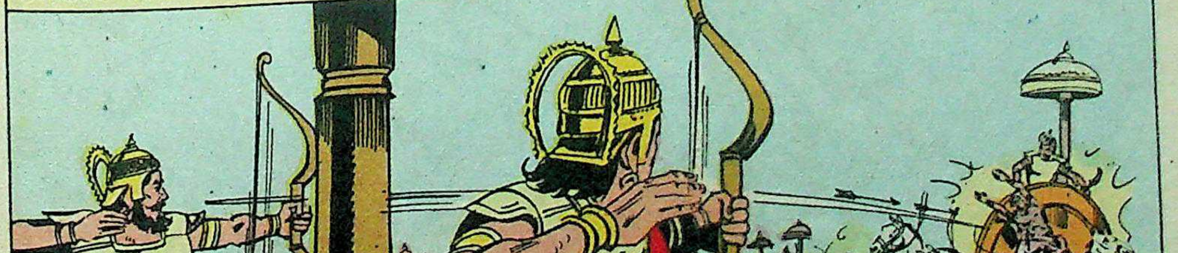
"UNDER YUDHISHTHIRA'S ATTACK SHALYA BECAME UNCONSCIOUS. HOWEVER, HE QUICKLY RECOVERED AND DISCHARGED A HUNDRED ARROWS AT YUDHISHTHIRA.



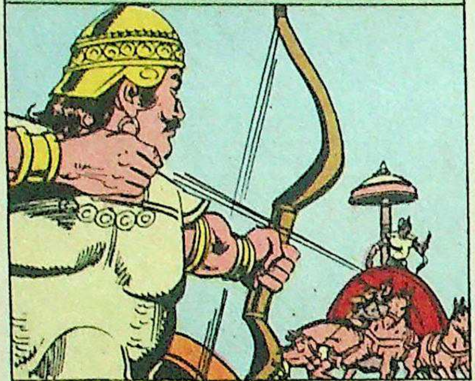
" WITH NINE WELL-AIMED ARROWS, YUDHISHTHIRA TORE OFF SHALYA'S ARMOUR. IN RETALIATION, SHALYA BROKE YUDHISHTHIRA'S BOW.



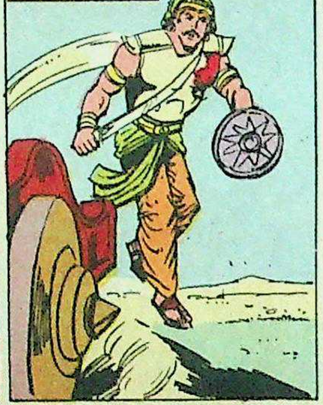
"SOON, SHALYA'S ARROWS RENT ASUNDER YUDHISHTHIRA'S GOLDEN ARMOUR AND KILLED HIS HORSES. KRIPA KILLED HIS CHARIOTEER.



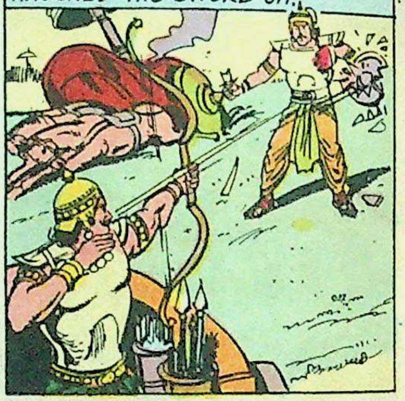
"BHEEMA BEGAN TO HARASS SHALYA. WITH A SINGLE SWIFT ARROW, HE BROKE SHALYA'S BOW AND WITH ANOTHER KILLED THE CHARIOTEER. SOON THE FOUR HORSES TOO FELL.



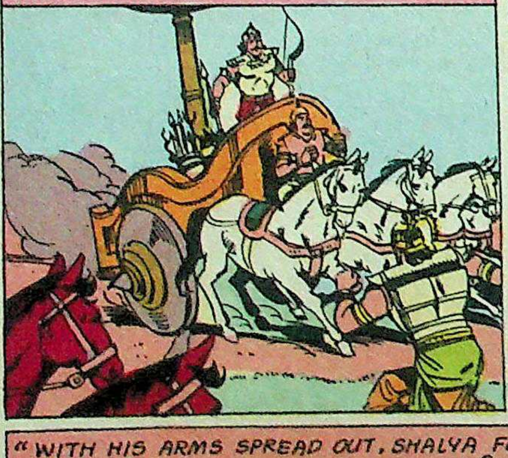
"SHALYA NOW JUMPED DOWN, SWORD IN ONE HAND AND SHIELD IN THE OTHER.



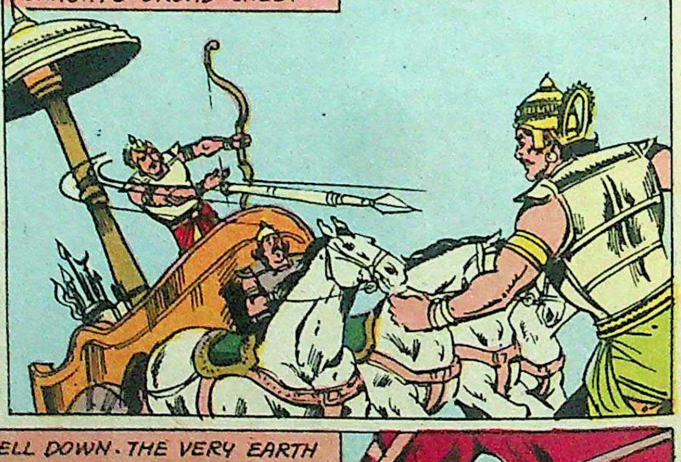
"DHRISHTADYUMNA, SHIKHANDI AND SATYAKI SURROUNDED SHALYA WHILE BHEEMA BROKE HIS SHIELD TO PIECES AND KNOCKED HIS SWORD OFF.



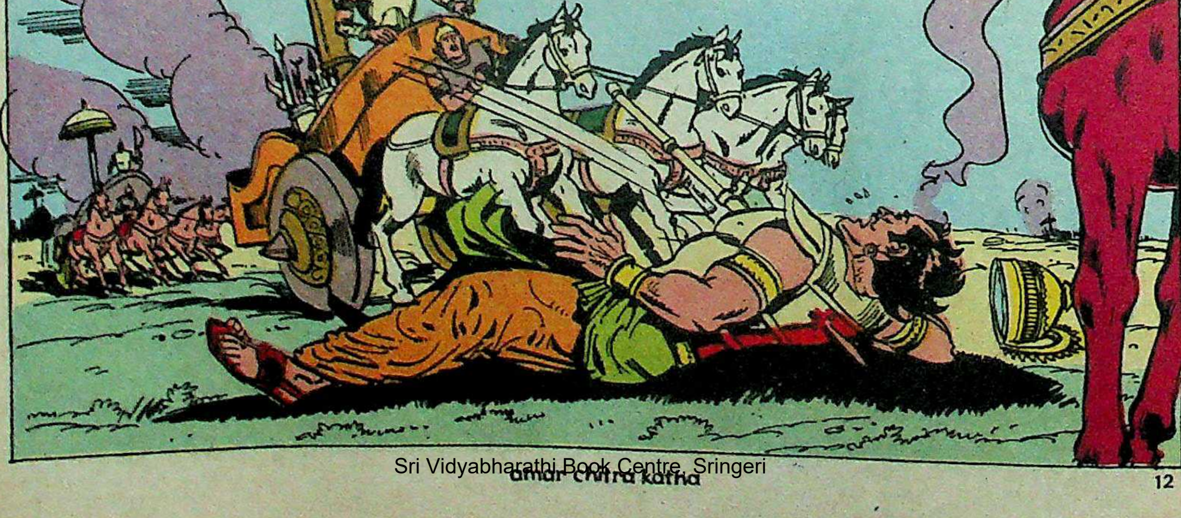
"THE FRIGHTENED KAURAVA SOLDIERS RAN PELL-MELL IN ALL DIRECTIONS. SHALYA CHARGED TOWARDS YUDHISHTHIRA.

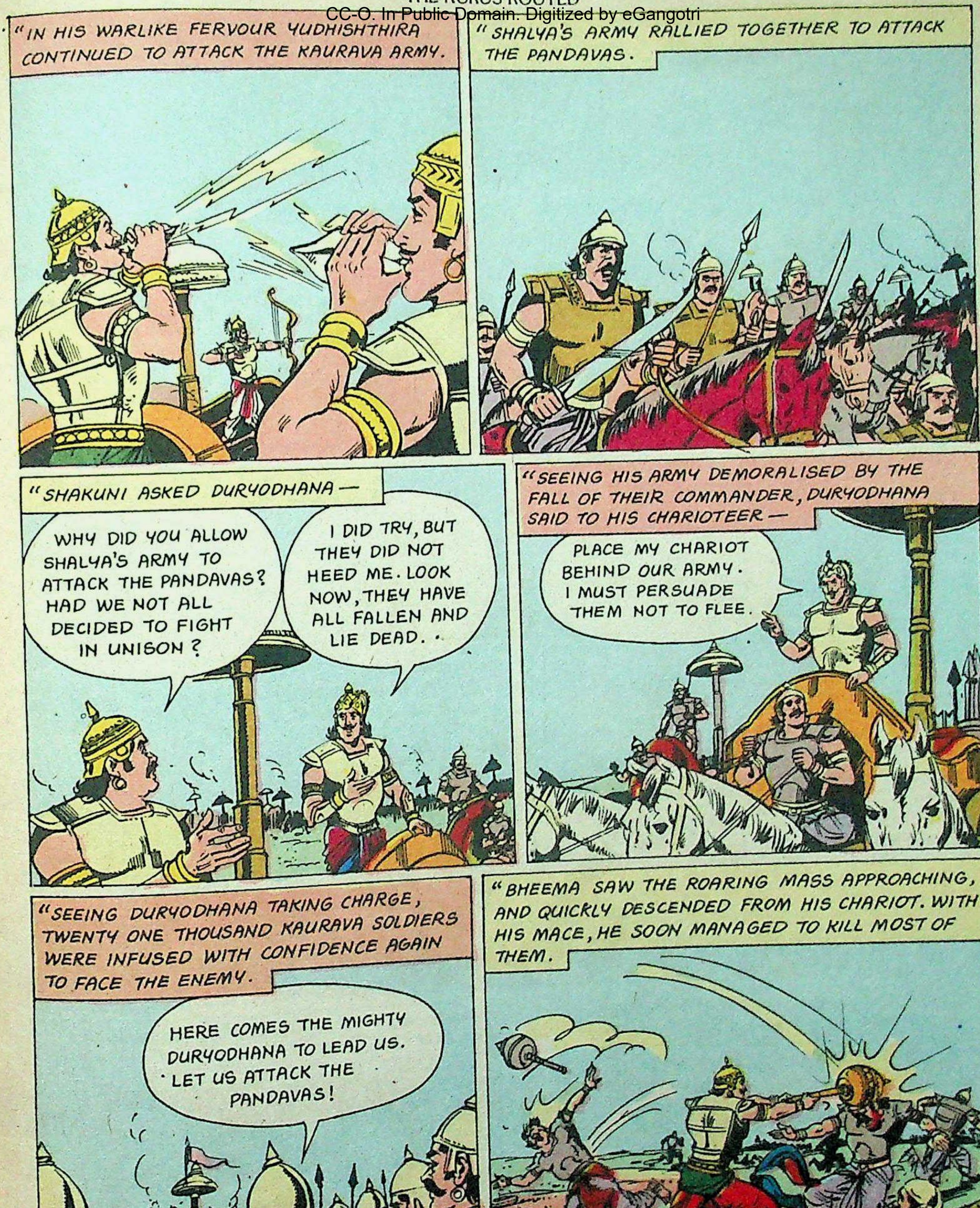


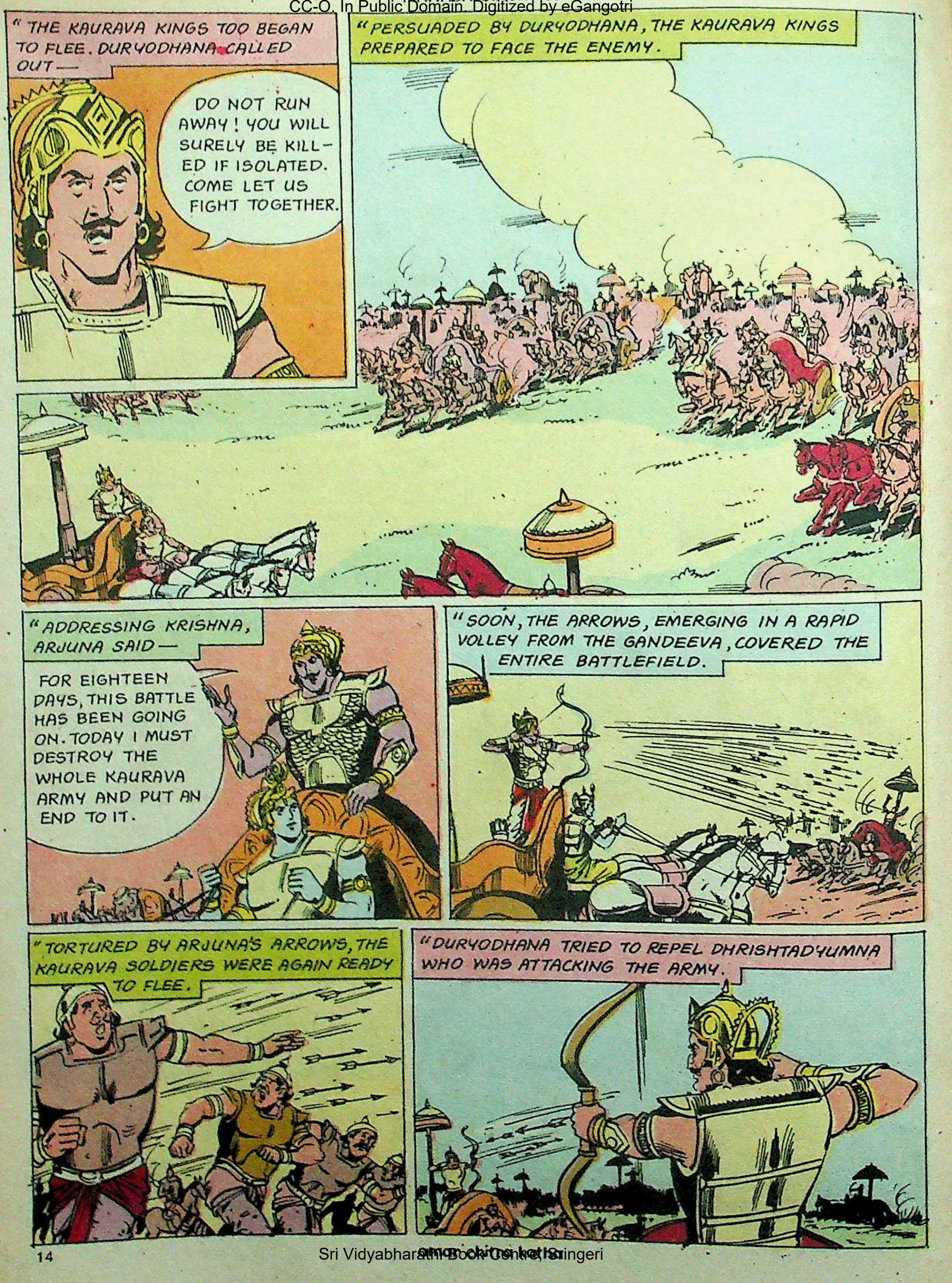
"YUDHISHTHIRA PICKED UP A FIERCE LOOKING GOLDEN JAVELIN, STUDDED WITH GEMS, AND THREW IT AT SHALYA'S BROAD CHEST.

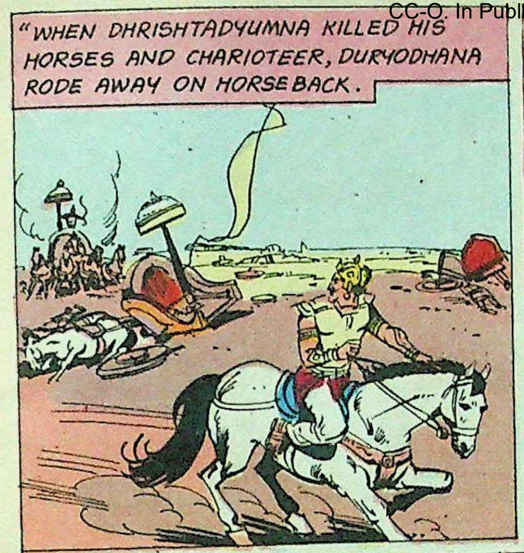


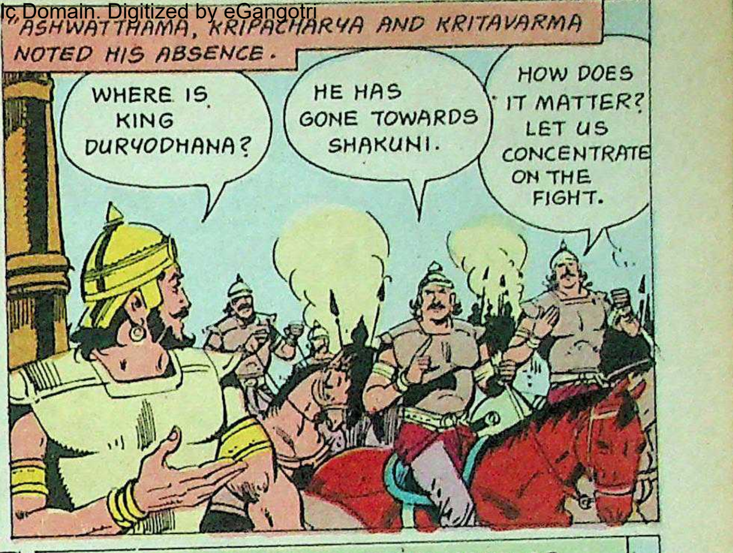
"WITH HIS ARMS SPREAD OUT, SHALYA FELL DOWN. THE VERY EARTH APPEARED TO RISE TO WELCOME HIM.

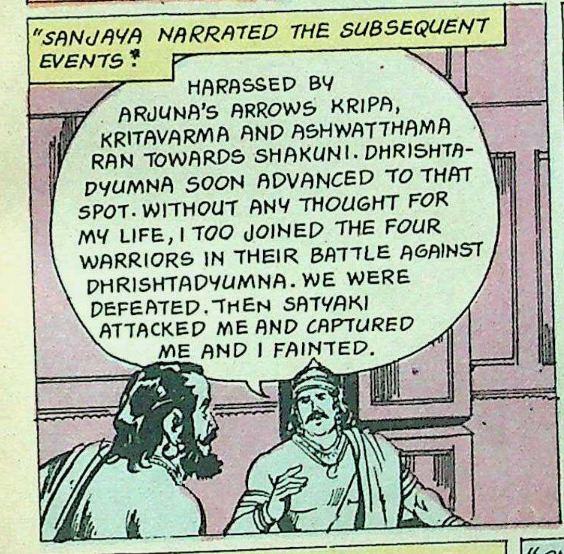


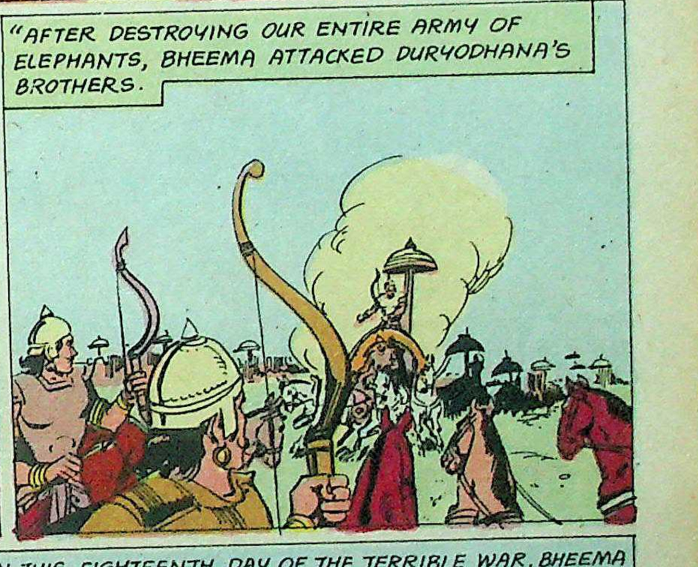

"IN HIS WARLIKE FERVOUR YUDHISHTHIRA CONTINUED TO ATTACK THE KAURAVA ARMY.
"SHALYA'S ARMY RALLIED TOGETHER TO ATTACK THE PANDAVAS.
"SHAKUNI ASKED DURYODHANA —
WHY DID YOU ALLOW SHALYA'S ARMY TO ATTACK THE PANDAVAS? HAD WE NOT ALL DECIDED TO FIGHT IN UNISON?
I DID TRY, BUT THEY DID NOT HEED ME. LOOK NOW, THEY HAVE ALL FALLEN AND LIE DEAD.
"SEEING HIS ARMY DEMORALISED BY THE FALL OF THEIR COMMANDER, DURYODHANA SAID TO HIS CHARIOTEER —
PLACE MY CHARIOT BEHIND OUR ARMY. I MUST PERSUADE THEM NOT TO FLEE.
"SEEING DURYODHANA TAKING CHARGE, TWENTY ONE THOUSAND KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE INFUSED WITH CONFIDENCE AGAIN TO FACE THE ENEMY.
HERE COMES THE MIGHTY DURYODHANA TO LEAD US. LET US ATTACK THE PANDAVAS!
"BHEEMA SAW THE ROARING MASS APPROACHING, AND QUICKLY DESCENDED FROM HIS CHARIOT. WITH HIS MACE, HE SOON MANAGED TO KILL MOST OF THEM.

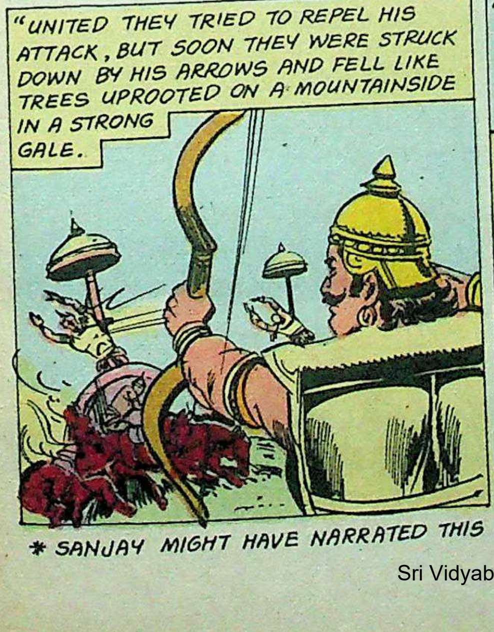

"THE KAURAVA KINGS TOO BEGAN TO FLEE. DURYODHANA CALLED OUT—
DO NOT RUN AWAY! YOU WILL SURELY BE KILLED IF ISOLATED. COME LET US FIGHT TOGETHER.
"PERSUADED BY DURYODHANA, THE KAURAVA KINGS PREPARED TO FACE THE ENEMY.
"ADDRESSING KRISHNA, ARJUNA SAID—
FOR EIGHTEEN DAYS, THIS BATTLE HAS BEEN GOING ON. TODAY I MUST DESTROY THE WHOLE KAURAVA ARMY AND PUT AN END TO IT.
"SOON, THE ARROWS, EMERGING IN A RAPID VOLLEY FROM THE GANDEEVA, COVERED THE ENTIRE BATTLEFIELD.
"TORTURED BY ARJUNA'S ARROWS, THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE AGAIN READY TO FLEE.
"DURYODHANA TRIED TO REPEL DHRISHTADYUMNA WHO WAS ATTACKING THE ARMY.

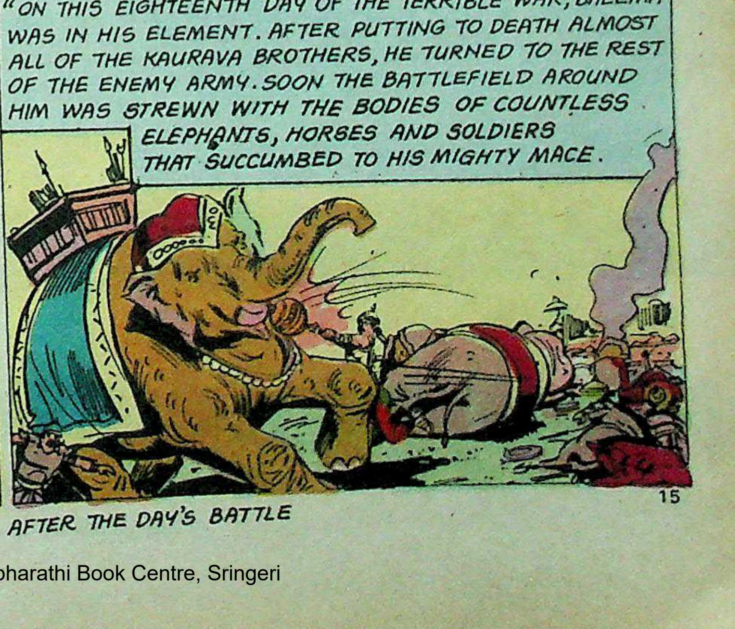

"WHEN DHRISHTADYUMNA KILLED HIS HORSES AND CHARIOTEER, DURYODHANA RODE AWAY ON HORSEBACK.


"ASHWATTHAMA, KRIPACHARYA AND KRITAVARMA NOTED HIS ABSENCE.
WHERE IS KING DURYODHANA?
HE HAS GONE TOWARDS SHAKUNI.
HOW DOES IT MATTER? LET US CONCENTRATE ON THE FIGHT.


"SANJAYA NARRATED THE SUBSEQUENT EVENTS*.
HARASSED BY ARJUNA'S ARROWS KRIPA, KRITAVARMA AND ASHWATTHAMA RAN TOWARDS SHAKUNI. DHRISHTADYUMNA SOON ADVANCED TO THAT SPOT. WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT FOR MY LIFE, I TOO JOINED THE FOUR WARRIORS IN THEIR BATTLE AGAINST DHRISHTADYUMNA. WE WERE DEFEATED. THEN SATYAKI ATTACKED ME AND CAPTURED ME AND I FAINTED.


"AFTER DESTROYING OUR ENTIRE ARMY OF ELEPHANTS, BHEEMA ATTACKED DURYODHANA'S BROTHERS.


"UNITED THEY TRIED TO REPEL HIS ATTACK, BUT SOON THEY WERE STRUCK DOWN BY HIS ARROWS AND FELL LIKE TREES UPROOTED ON A MOUNTAINSIDE IN A STRONG GALE.


"ON THIS EIGHTEENTH DAY OF THE TERRIBLE WAR, BHEEMA WAS IN HIS ELEMENT. AFTER PUTTING TO DEATH ALMOST ALL OF THE KAURAVA BROTHERS, HE TURNED TO THE REST OF THE ENEMY ARMY. SOON THE BATTLEFIELD AROUND HIM WAS STREWN WITH THE BODIES OF COUNTLESS ELEPHANTS, HORSES AND SOLDIERS THAT SUCCUMBED TO HIS MIGHTY MACE.

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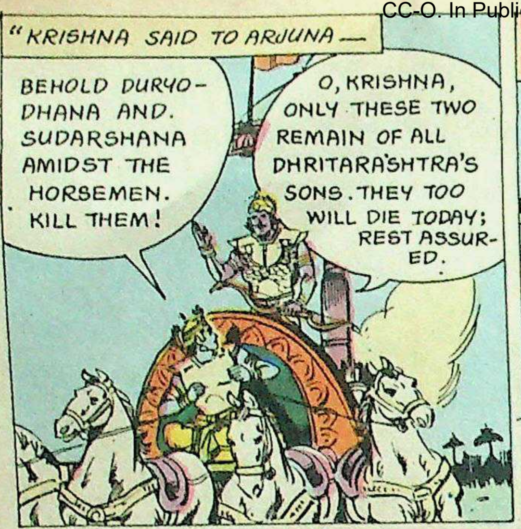
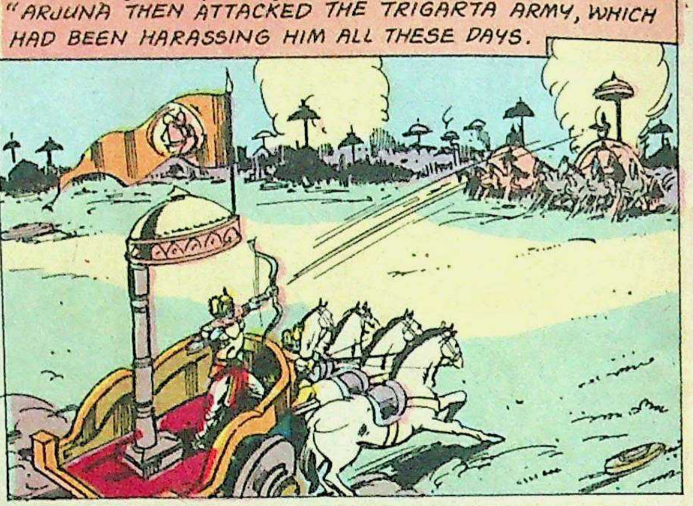
* SANJAY MIGHT HAVE NARRATED THIS AFTER THE DAY'S BATTLE

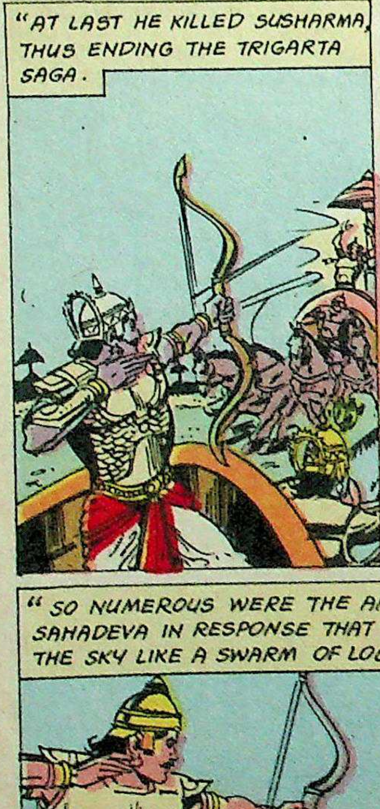
"KRISHNA SAID TO ARJUNA —


BEHOLD DURYODHANA AND. SUDARSHANA AMIDST THE HORSEMEN. KILL THEM!
O, KRISHNA, ONLY THESE TWO REMAIN OF ALL DHRITARASHTRA'S SONS. THEY TOO WILL DIE TODAY; REST ASSURED.

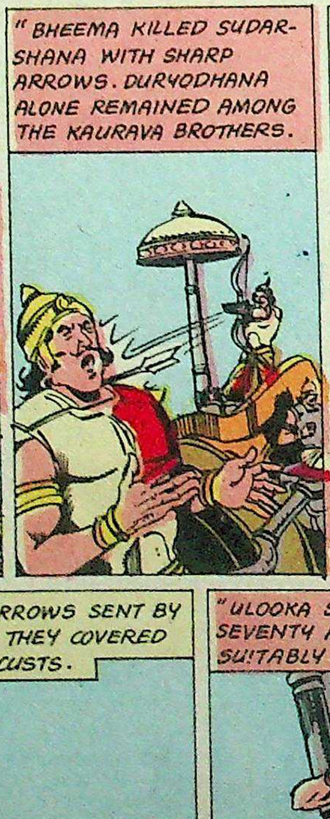
"ARJUNA THEN ATTACKED THE TRIGARTA ARMY, WHICH HAD BEEN HARASSING HIM ALL THESE DAYS.



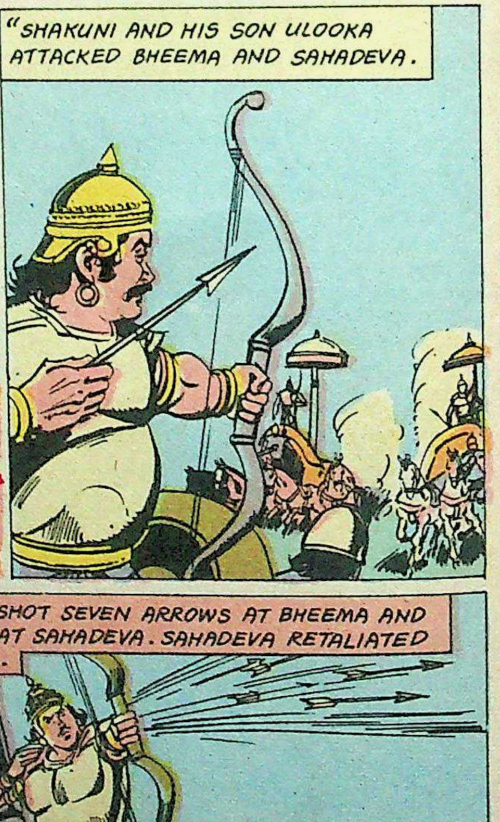
"AT LAST HE KILLED SUSHARMA, THUS ENDING THE TRIGARTA SAGA.



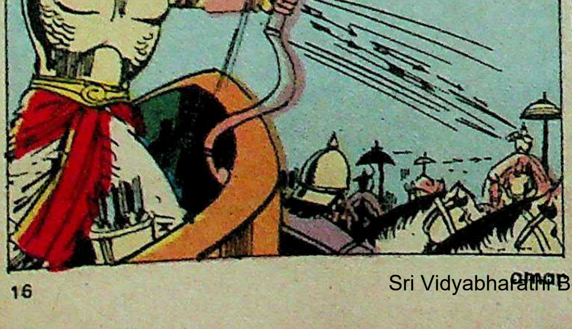
"BHEEMA KILLED SUDARSHANA WITH SHARP ARROWS. DURYODHANA ALONE REMAINED AMONG THE KAURAVA BROTHERS.



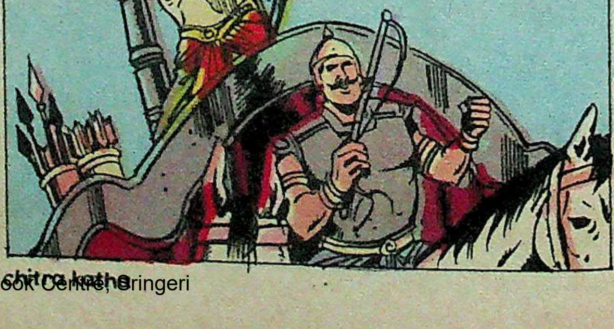
"SHAKUNI AND HIS SON ULOOKA ATTACKED BHEEMA AND SAHADEVA.



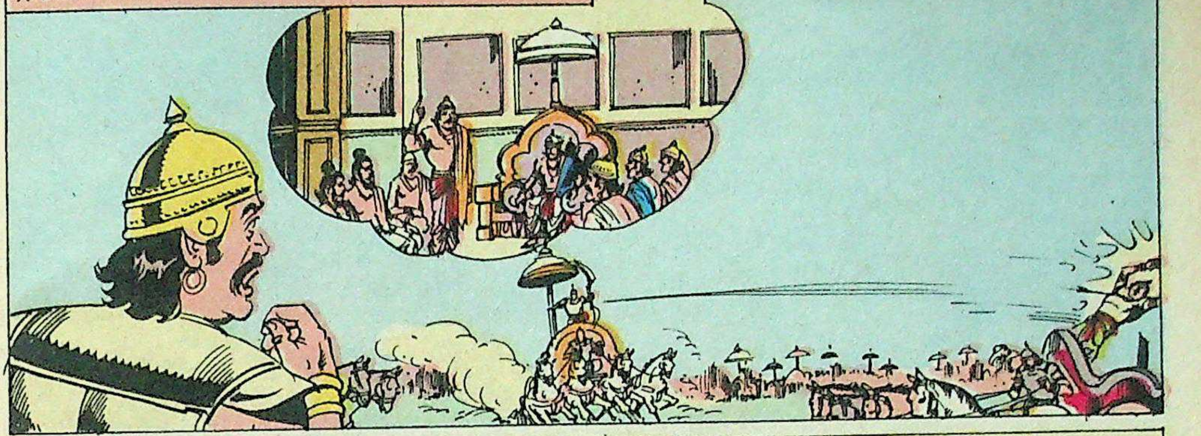
"SO NUMEROUS WERE THE ARROWS SENT BY SAHADEVA IN RESPONSE THAT THEY COVERED THE SKY LIKE A SWARM OF LOCUSTS.



"ULOOKA SHOT SEVEN ARROWS AT BHEEMA AND SEVENTY AT SAHADEVA. SAHADEVA RETALIATED SUITABLY.

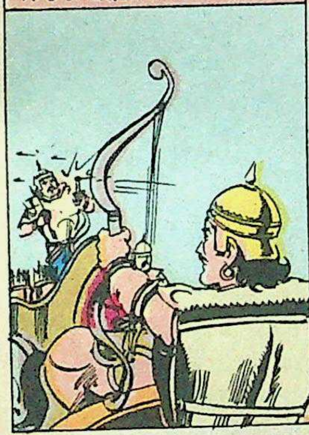


"HE BEHEADED ULOOKA WITH HIS SPEAR. SHAKUNI'S EYES BRIMMED OVER WITH TEARS. WITH A DEEP SIGH HE RECALLED VIDURA'S WORDS.

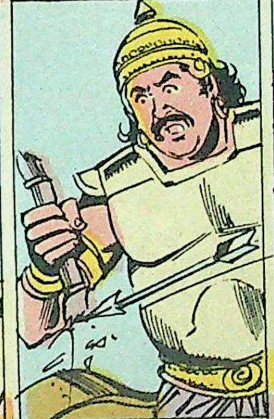


"AN ENRAGED SHAKUNI ATTACKED SAHADEVA WITH VARIOUS WEAPONS, BUT HIS ATTEMPTS WERE OF NO AVAIL.

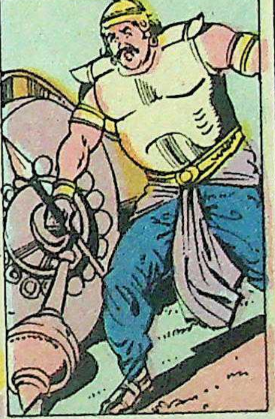
"HIS DAGGER WAS CUT—



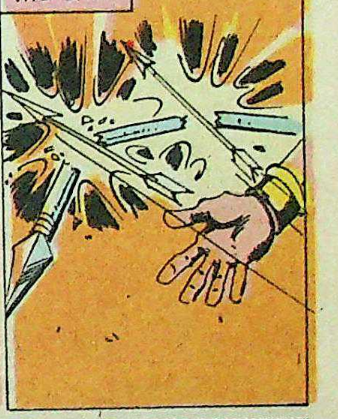
"HIS BOW WAS BROKEN—



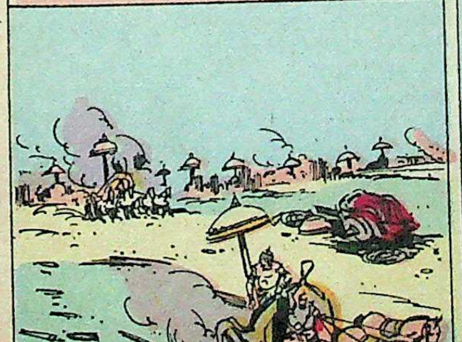
"HIS MACE WAS FELLED—



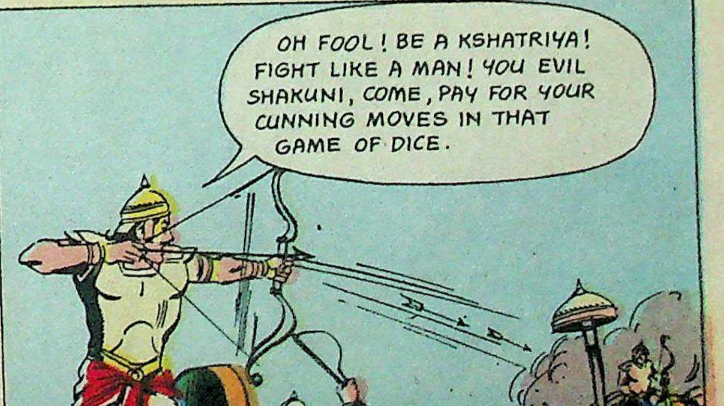
"AND HIS SPEAR FELL LIKE LIGHTNING FROM THE SKY.

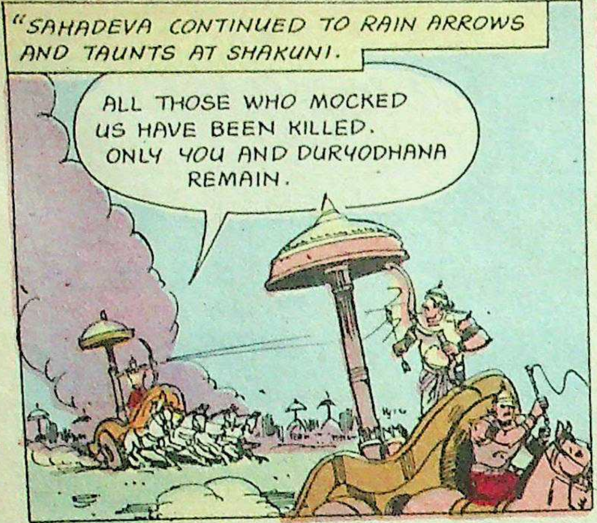


"FILLED WITH FEAR, SHAKUNI AND HIS MEN RAN AWAY. THE PANDAVAS REJOICED IN THEIR VICTORY.



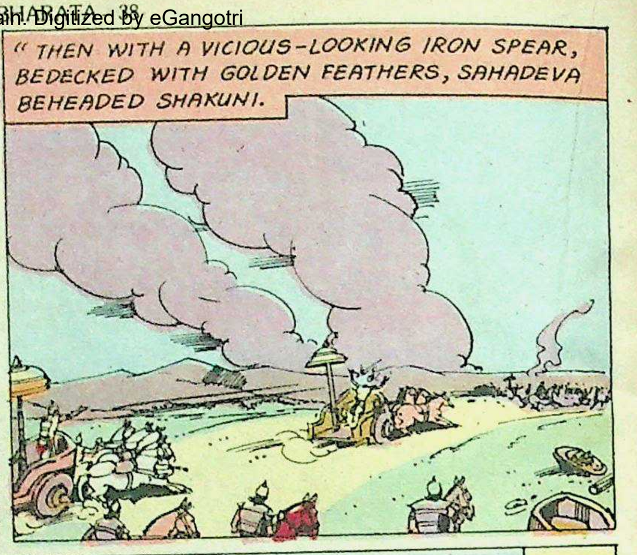
"SAHADEVA CHASED THE FLEEING SHAKUNI.


OH FOOL! BE A KSHATRIYA! FIGHT LIKE A MAN! YOU EVIL SHAKUNI, COME, PAY FOR YOUR CUNNING MOVES IN THAT GAME OF DICE.

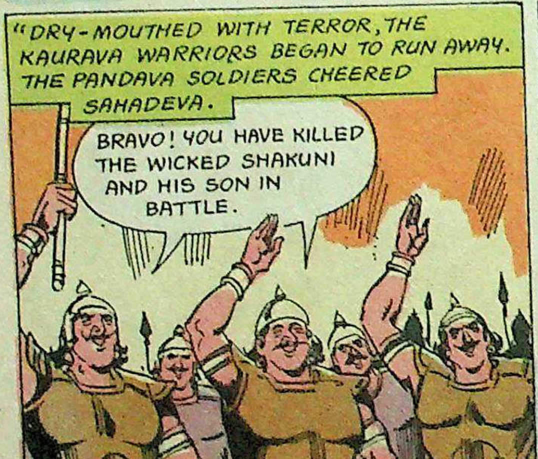


"SAHADEVA CONTINUED TO RAIN ARROWS AND TAUNTS AT SHAKUNI.

ALL THOSE WHO MOCKED US HAVE BEEN KILLED. ONLY YOU AND DURYODHANA REMAIN.

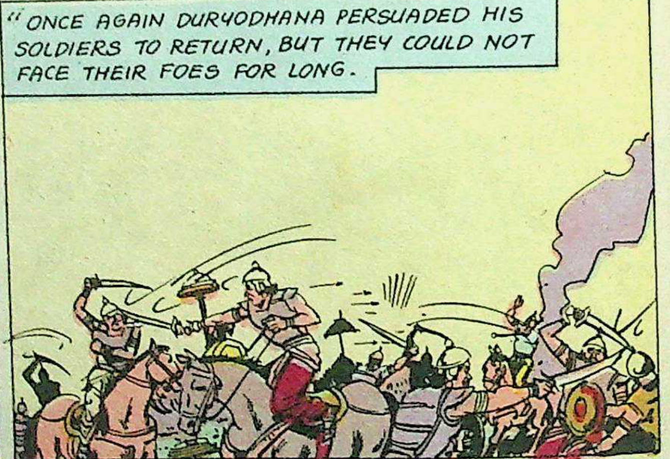


"THEN WITH A VICIOUS-LOOKING IRON SPEAR, BEDECKED WITH GOLDEN FEATHERS, SAHADEVA BEHEADED SHAKUNI.

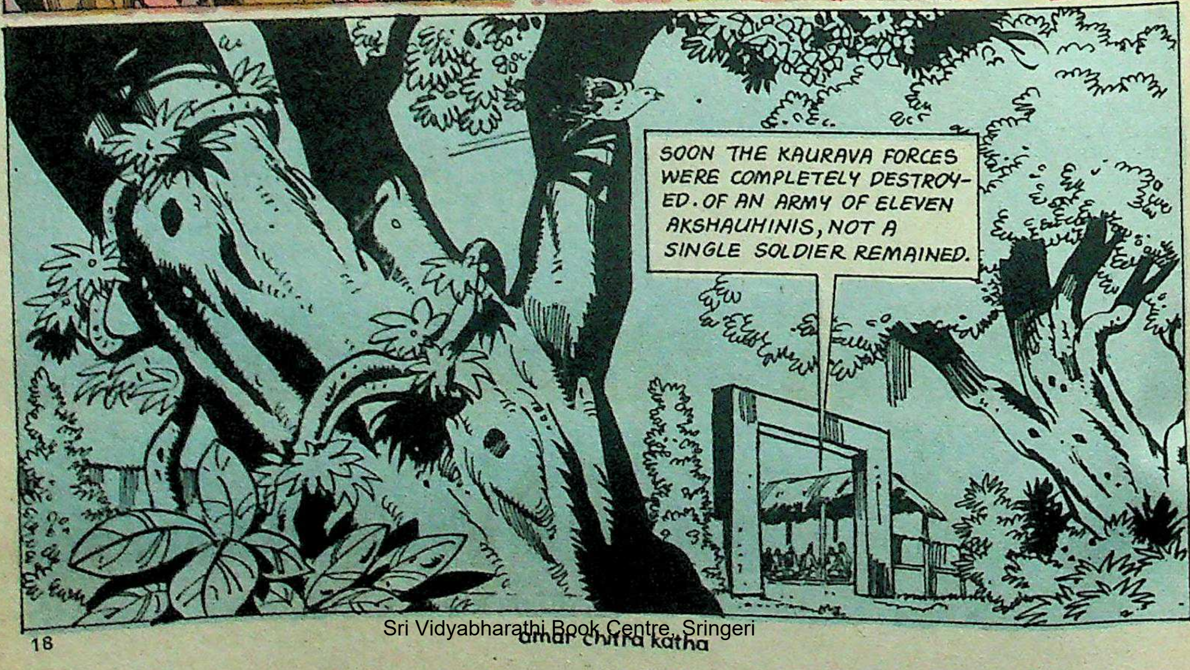


"DRY-MOUTHED WITH TERROR, THE KAURAVA WARRIORS BEGAN TO RUN AWAY. THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS CHEERED SAHADEVA.

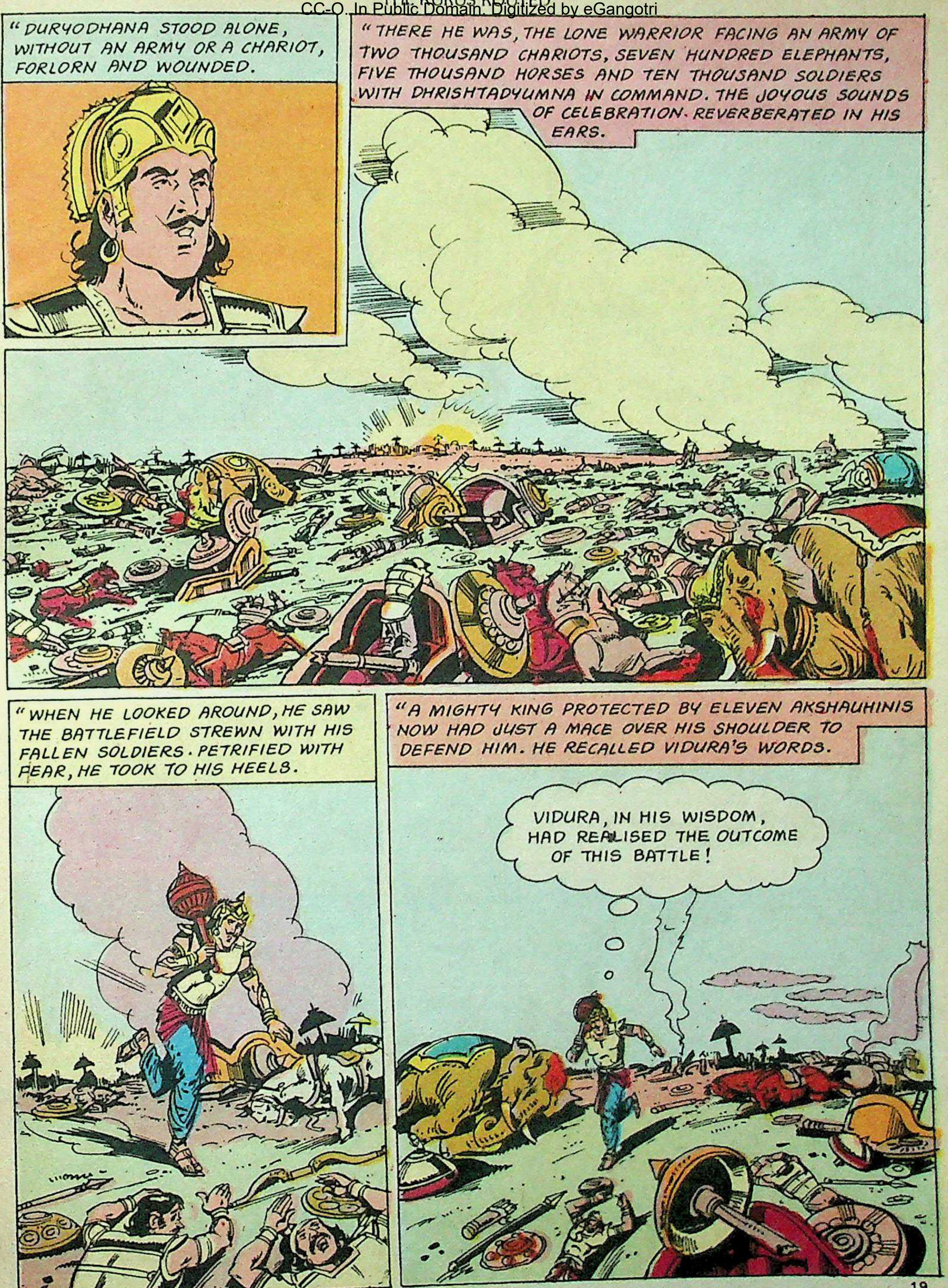
BRAVO! YOU HAVE KILLED THE WICKED SHAKUNI AND HIS SON IN BATTLE.

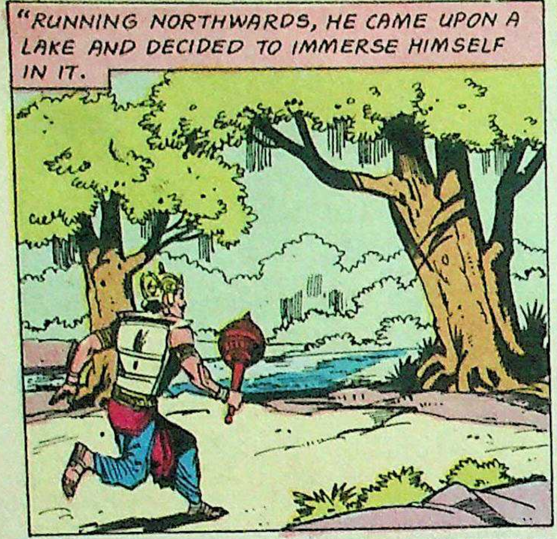


"ONCE AGAIN DURYODHANA PERSUADED HIS SOLDIERS TO RETURN, BUT THEY COULD NOT FACE THEIR FOES FOR LONG.

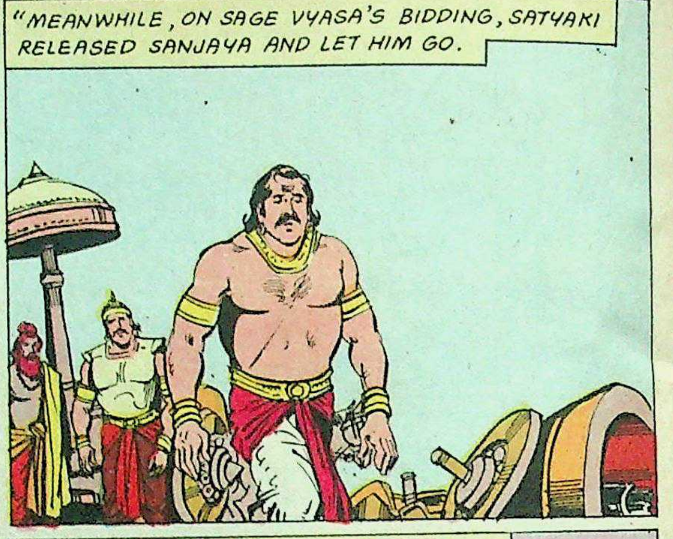


SOON THE KAURAVA FORCES WERE COMPLETELY DESTROYED. OF AN ARMY OF ELEVEN AKSHAUHINIS, NOT A SINGLE SOLDIER REMAINED.

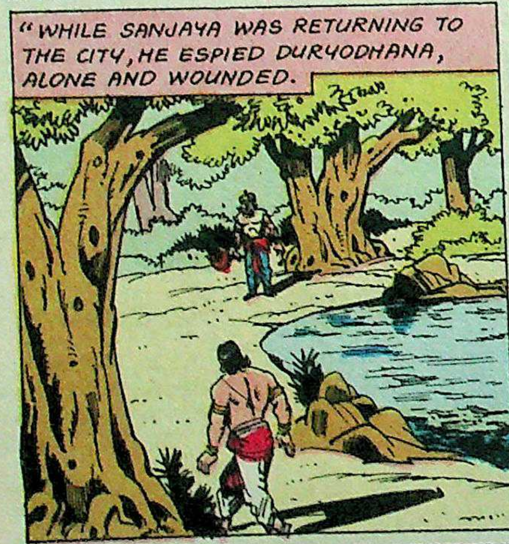

"DURYODHANA STOOD ALONE, WITHOUT AN ARMY OR A CHARIOT, FORLORN AND WOUNDED.
"THERE HE WAS, THE LONE WARRIOR FACING AN ARMY OF TWO THOUSAND CHARIOTS, SEVEN HUNDRED ELEPHANTS, FIVE THOUSAND HORSES AND TEN THOUSAND SOLDIERS WITH DHRISHTADYUMNA IN COMMAND. THE JOYOUS SOUNDS OF CELEBRATION REVERBERATED IN HIS EARS.
"WHEN HE LOOKED AROUND, HE SAW THE BATTLEFIELD STREWN WITH HIS FALLEN SOLDIERS. PETRIFIED WITH FEAR, HE TOOK TO HIS HEELS.
"A MIGHTY KING PROTECTED BY ELEVEN AKSHAUHINIS NOW HAD JUST A MACE OVER HIS SHOULDER TO DEFEND HIM. HE RECALLED VIDURA'S WORDS.
VIDURA, IN HIS WISDOM, HAD REALISED THE OUTCOME OF THIS BATTLE!



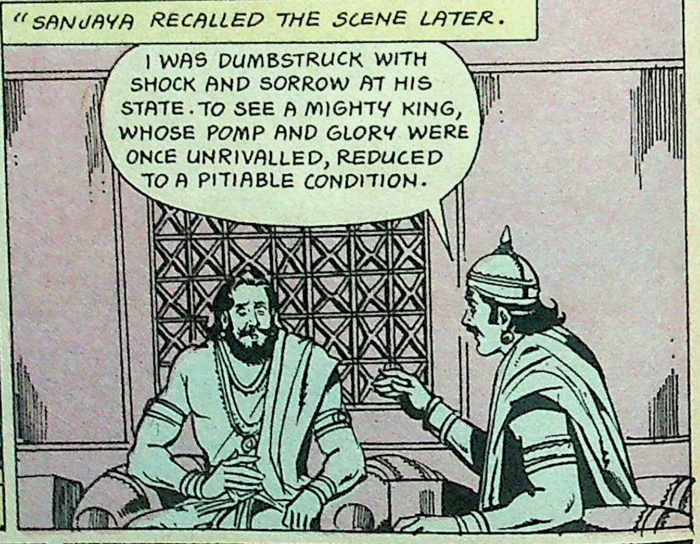
"RUNNING NORTHWARDS, HE CAME UPON A LAKE AND DECIDED TO IMMERSE HIMSELF IN IT.



"MEANWHILE, ON SAGE VYASA'S BIDDING, SATYAKI RELEASED SANJAYA AND LET HIM GO.

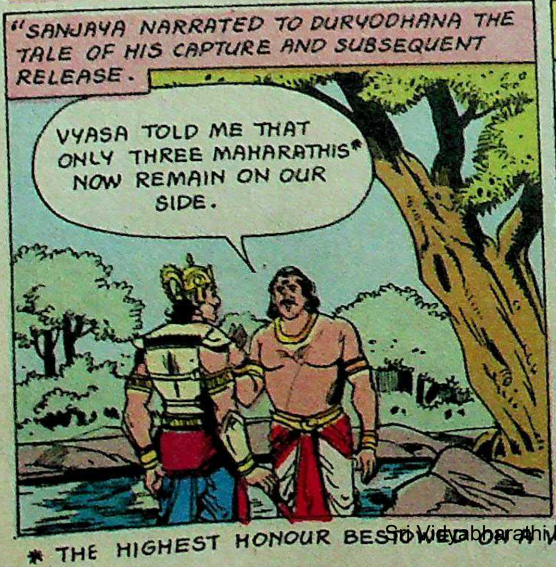


"WHILE SANJAYA WAS RETURNING TO THE CITY, HE ESPIED DURYODHANA, ALONE AND WOUNDED.



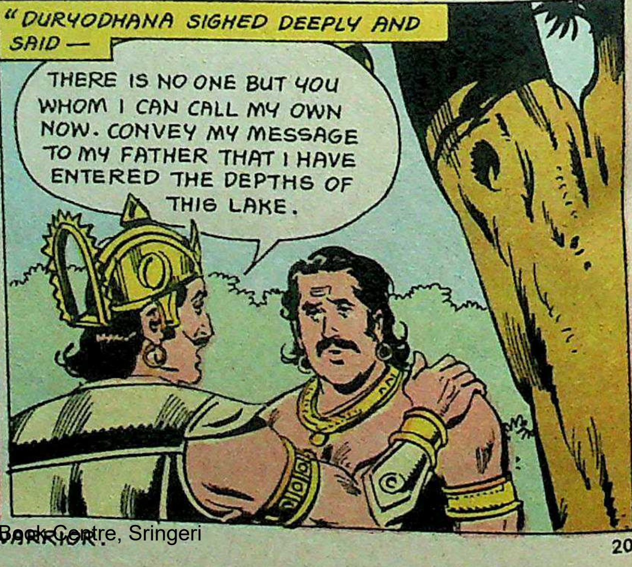
"SANJAYA RECALLED THE SCENE LATER.

I WAS DUMBSTRUCK WITH SHOCK AND SORROW AT HIS STATE. TO SEE A MIGHTY KING, WHOSE POMP AND GLORY WERE ONCE UNRIVALLED, REDUCED TO A PITIABLE CONDITION.



"SANJAYA NARRATED TO DURYODHANA THE TALE OF HIS CAPTURE AND SUBSEQUENT RELEASE.

VYASA TOLD ME THAT ONLY THREE MAHARATHIS* NOW REMAIN ON OUR SIDE.



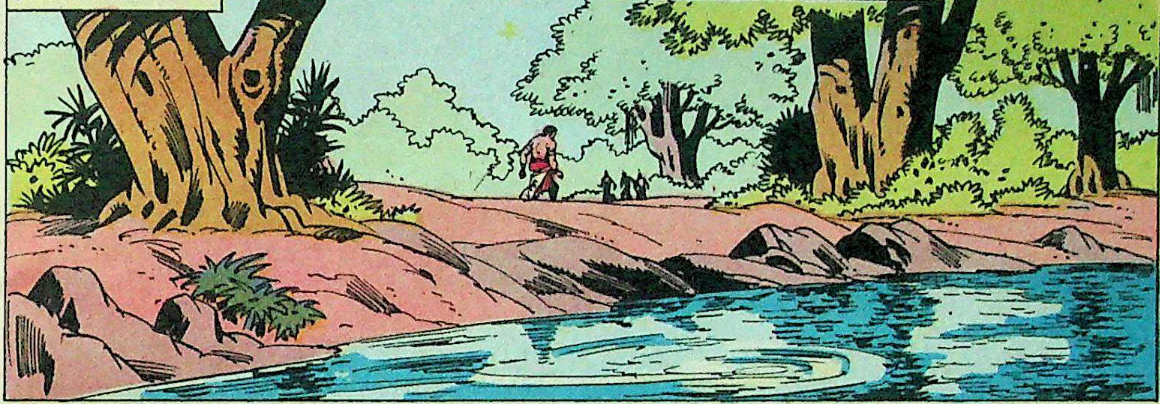
"DURYODHANA SIGHED DEEPLY AND SAID—

THERE IS NO ONE BUT YOU WHOM I CAN CALL MY OWN NOW. CONVEY MY MESSAGE TO MY FATHER THAT I HAVE ENTERED THE DEPTHS OF THIS LAKE.

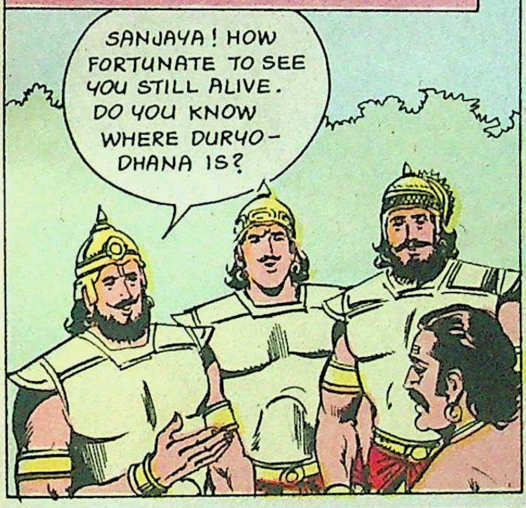
---

* THE HIGHEST HONOUR BESTOWED ON A WARRIOR.

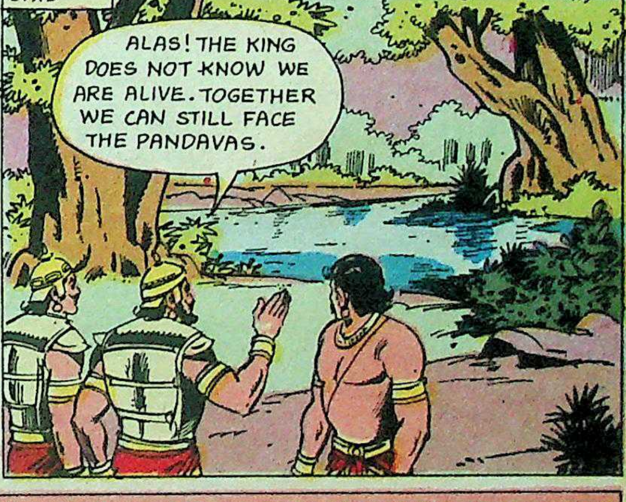
"DURYODHANA THEN ENTERED THE POOL AFTER MAKING THE WATER STAND STILL. JUST THEN, ASHWATTHAMA, KRIPACHARYA AND KRITAVARMA ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.



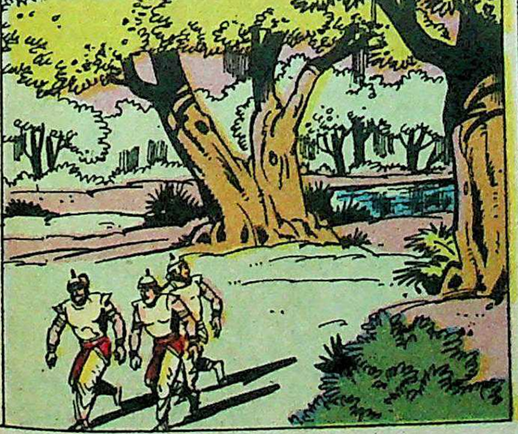
"WOUNDED AND WEARY, THEY WERE SURPRISED TO SEE SANJAYA.


SANJAYA! HOW FORTUNATE TO SEE YOU STILL ALIVE. DO YOU KNOW WHERE DURYODHANA IS?

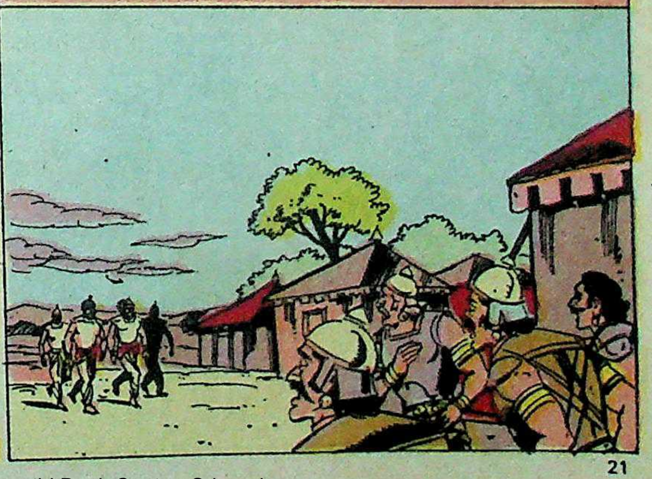
"SANJAYA GAVE THEM DURYODHANA'S MESSAGE. ASHWATTHAMA LOOKED TOWARDS THE LAKE AND SAID —

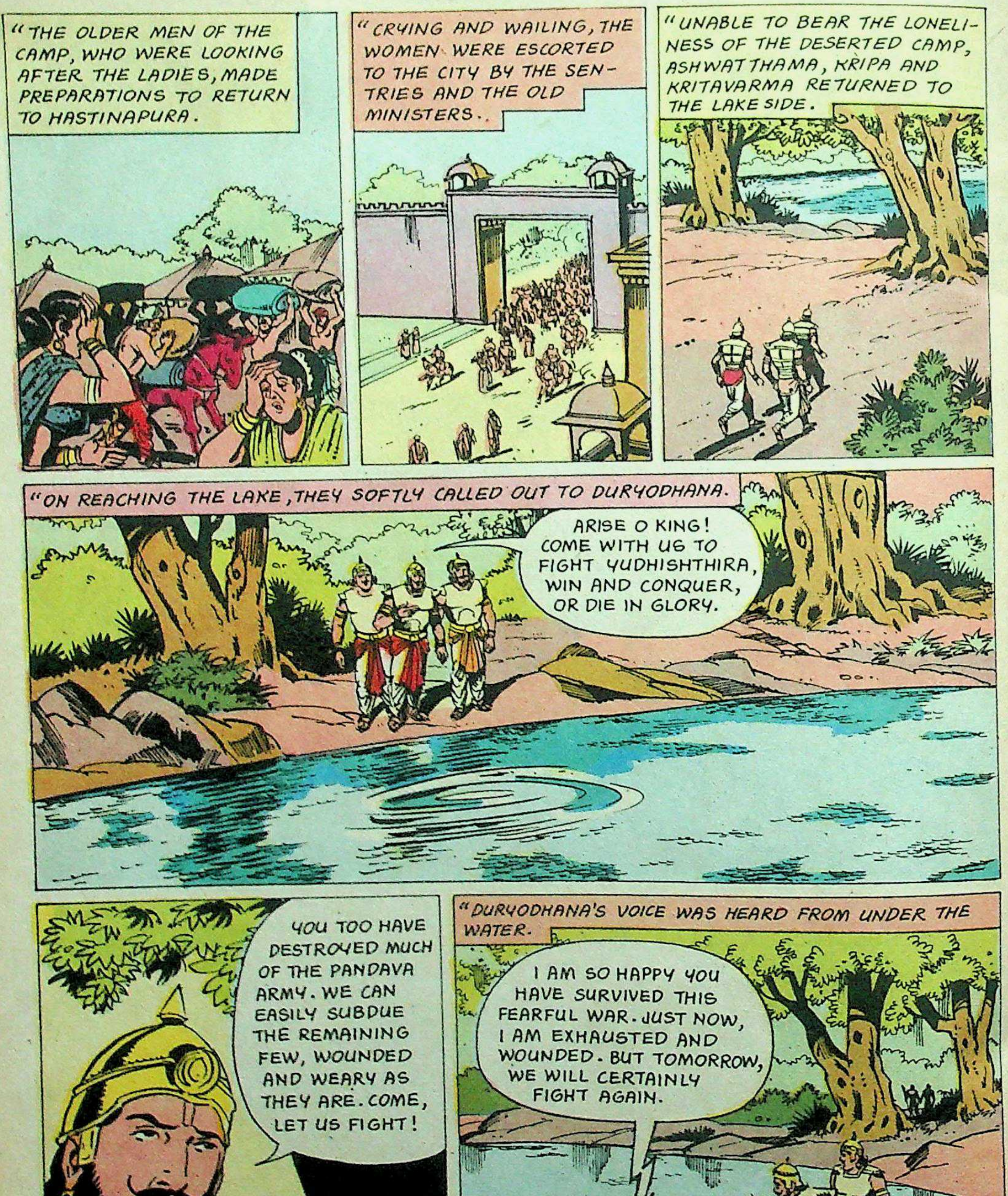

ALAS! THE KING DOES NOT KNOW WE ARE ALIVE. TOGETHER WE CAN STILL FACE THE PANDAVAS.

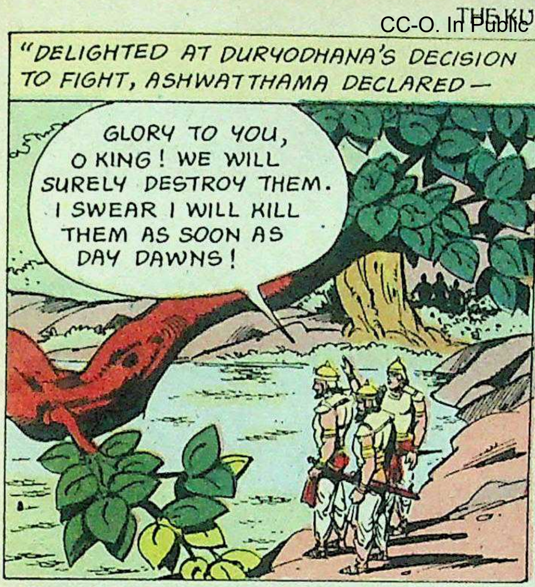
"THE THREE WARRIORS WAITED AWHILE, BEMOANING DURYODHANA'S DECISION. BUT WHEN THEY HEARD THE SOUND OF SOLDIERS APPROACHING, THEY WENT AWAY.



"ALONG WITH SANJAYA, THEY RETURNED TO THE CAMP. ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEFEAT, THE GUARDS, ALREADY SHAKEN WITH WORRY, BROKE DOWN.

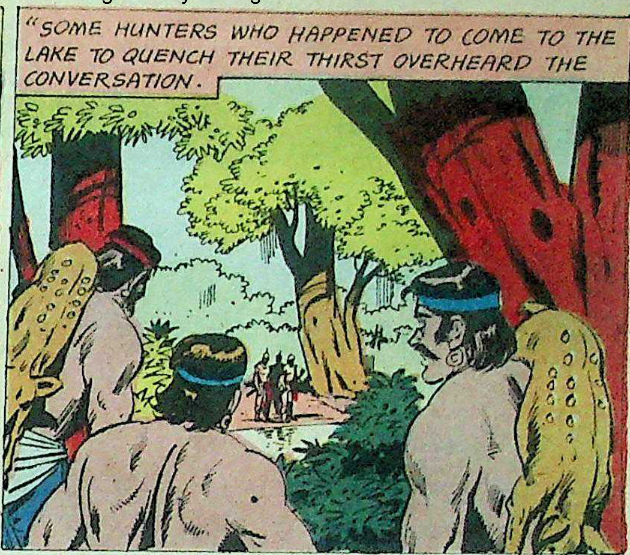



"THE OLDER MEN OF THE CAMP, WHO WERE LOOKING AFTER THE LADIES, MADE PREPARATIONS TO RETURN TO HASTINAPURA.
"CRYING AND WAILING, THE WOMEN WERE ESCORTED TO THE CITY BY THE SENTRIES AND THE OLD MINISTERS.
"UNABLE TO BEAR THE LONELINESS OF THE DESERTED CAMP, ASHWATTHAMA, KRIPA AND KRITAVARMA RETURNED TO THE LAKE SIDE.
"ON REACHING THE LAKE, THEY SOFTLY CALLED OUT TO DURYODHANA.
ARISE O KING! COME WITH US TO FIGHT YUDHISHTHIRA, WIN AND CONQUER, OR DIE IN GLORY.
YOU TOO HAVE DESTROYED MUCH OF THE PANDAVA ARMY. WE CAN EASILY SUBDUE THE REMAINING FEW, WOUNDED AND WEARY AS THEY ARE. COME, LET US FIGHT!
"DURYODHANA'S VOICE WAS HEARD FROM UNDER THE WATER.
I AM SO HAPPY YOU HAVE SURVIVED THIS FEARFUL WAR. JUST NOW, I AM EXHAUSTED AND WOUNDED. BUT TOMORROW, WE WILL CERTAINLY FIGHT AGAIN.

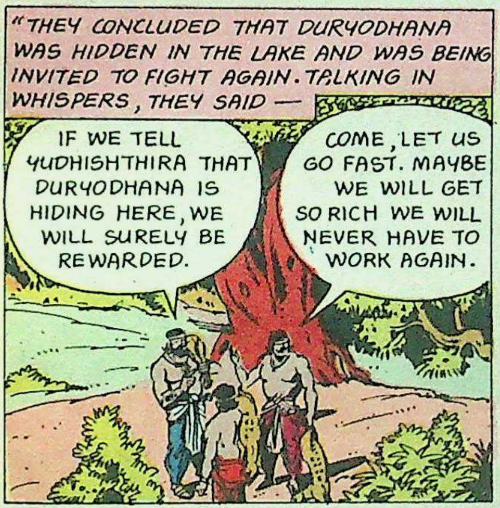


"DELIGHTED AT DURYODHANA'S DECISION TO FIGHT, ASHWATTHAMA DECLARED —

GLORY TO YOU, O KING! WE WILL SURELY DESTROY THEM. I SWEAR I WILL KILL THEM AS SOON AS DAY DAWNS!

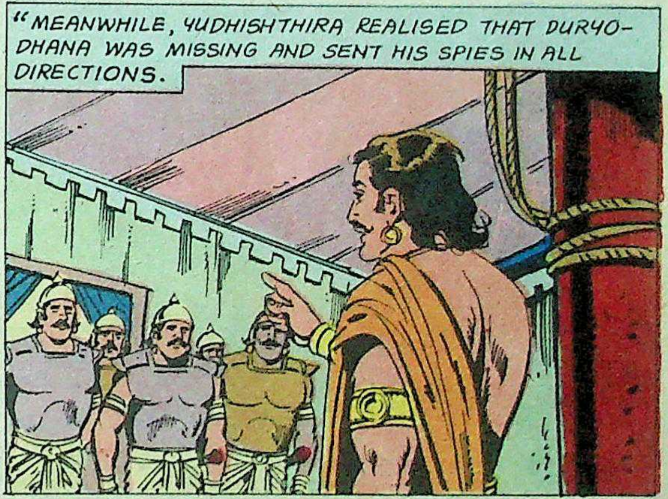


"SOME HUNTERS WHO HAPPENED TO COME TO THE LAKE TO QUENCH THEIR THIRST OVERHEARD THE CONVERSATION.

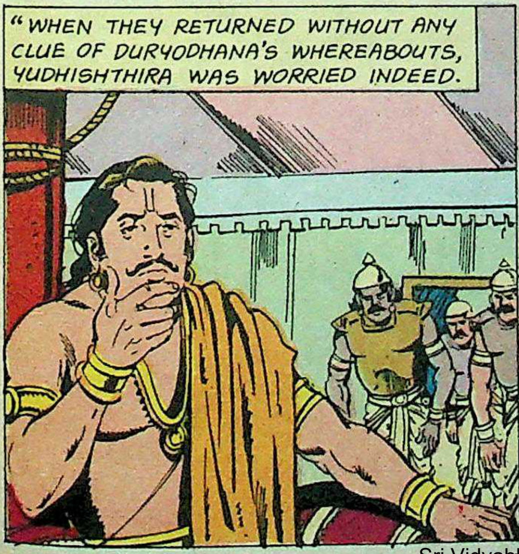


"THEY CONCLUDED THAT DURYODHANA WAS HIDDEN IN THE LAKE AND WAS BEING INVITED TO FIGHT AGAIN. TALKING IN WHISPERS, THEY SAID —

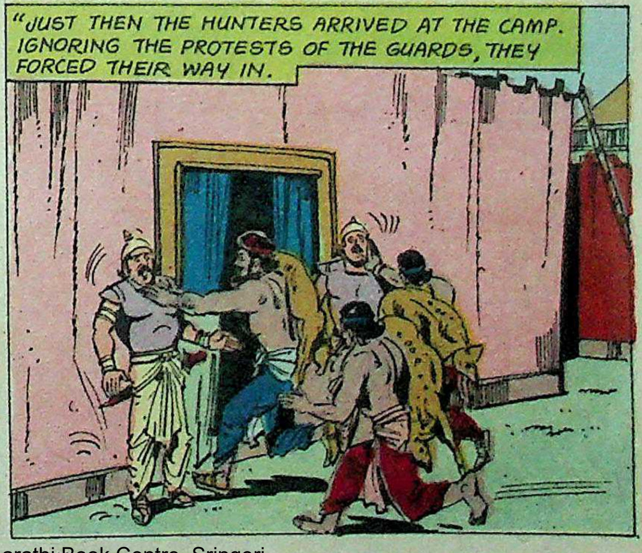
IF WE TELL YUDHISHTHIRA THAT DURYODHANA IS HIDING HERE, WE WILL SURELY BE REWARDED.
COME, LET US GO FAST. MAYBE WE WILL GET SO RICH WE WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORK AGAIN.



"MEANWHILE, YUDHISHTHIRA REALISED THAT DURYODHANA WAS MISSING AND SENT HIS SPIES IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

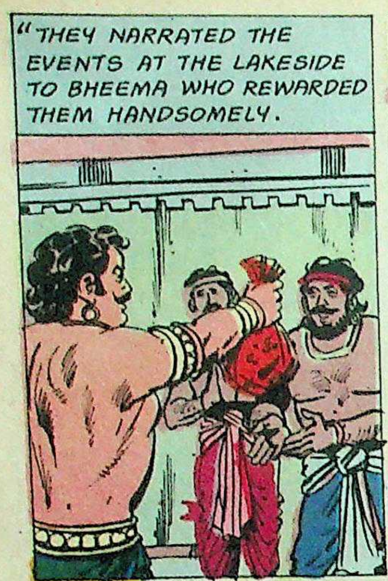


"WHEN THEY RETURNED WITHOUT ANY CLUE OF DURYODHANA'S WHEREABOUTS, YUDHISHTHIRA WAS WORRIED INDEED.

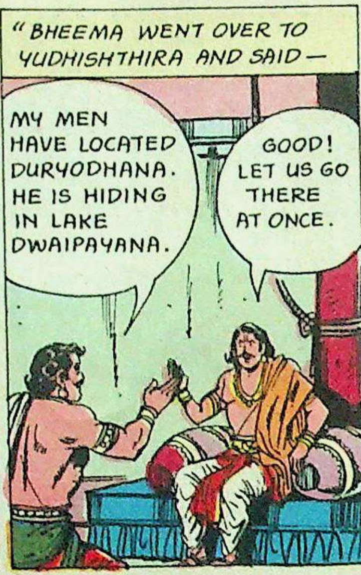


"JUST THEN THE HUNTERS ARRIVED AT THE CAMP. IGNORING THE PROTESTS OF THE GUARDS, THEY FORCED THEIR WAY IN.

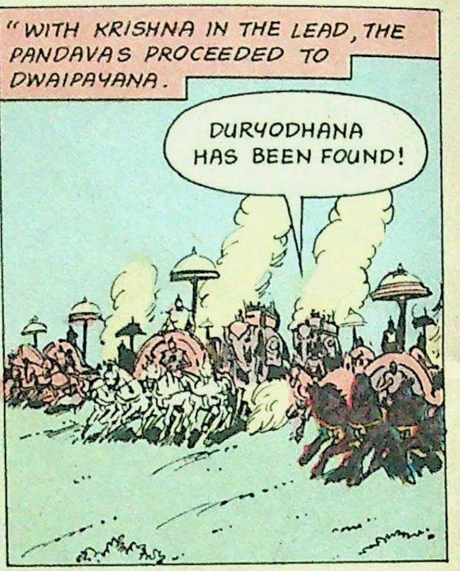
"THEY NARRATED THE EVENTS AT THE LAKESIDE TO BHEEMA WHO REWARDED THEM HANDSOMELY.



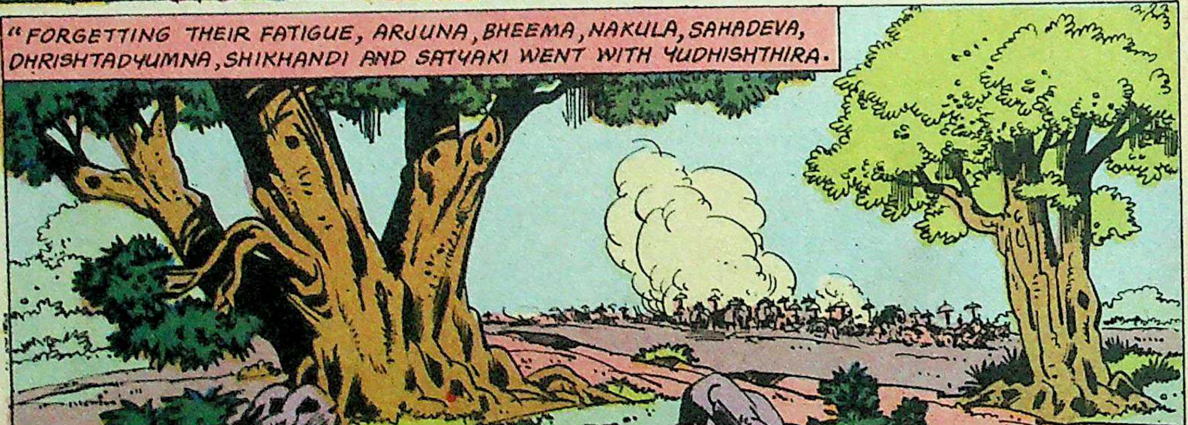
"BHEEMA WENT OVER TO YUDHISHTHIRA AND SAID—


MY MEN HAVE LOCATED DURYODHANA. HE IS HIDING IN LAKE DWAIPAYANA.
GOOD! LET US GO THERE AT ONCE.

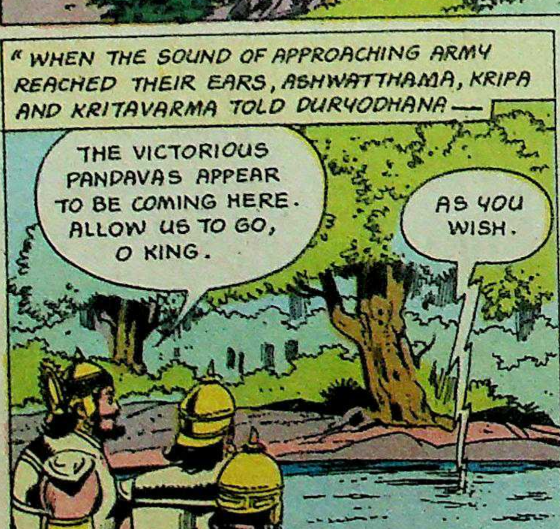
"WITH KRISHNA IN THE LEAD, THE PANDAVAS PROCEEDED TO DWAIPAYANA.


DURYODHANA HAS BEEN FOUND!

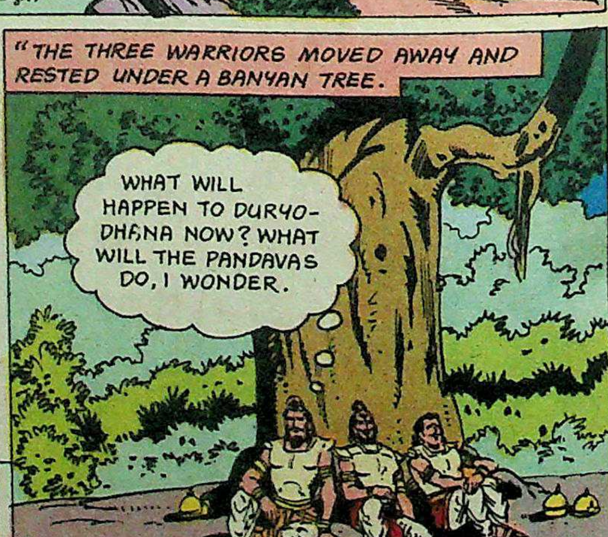
"FORGETTING THEIR FATIGUE, ARJUNA, BHEEMA, NAKULA, SAHADEVA, DHRISHTADYUMNA, SHIKHANDI AND SATYAKI WENT WITH YUDHISHTHIRA.

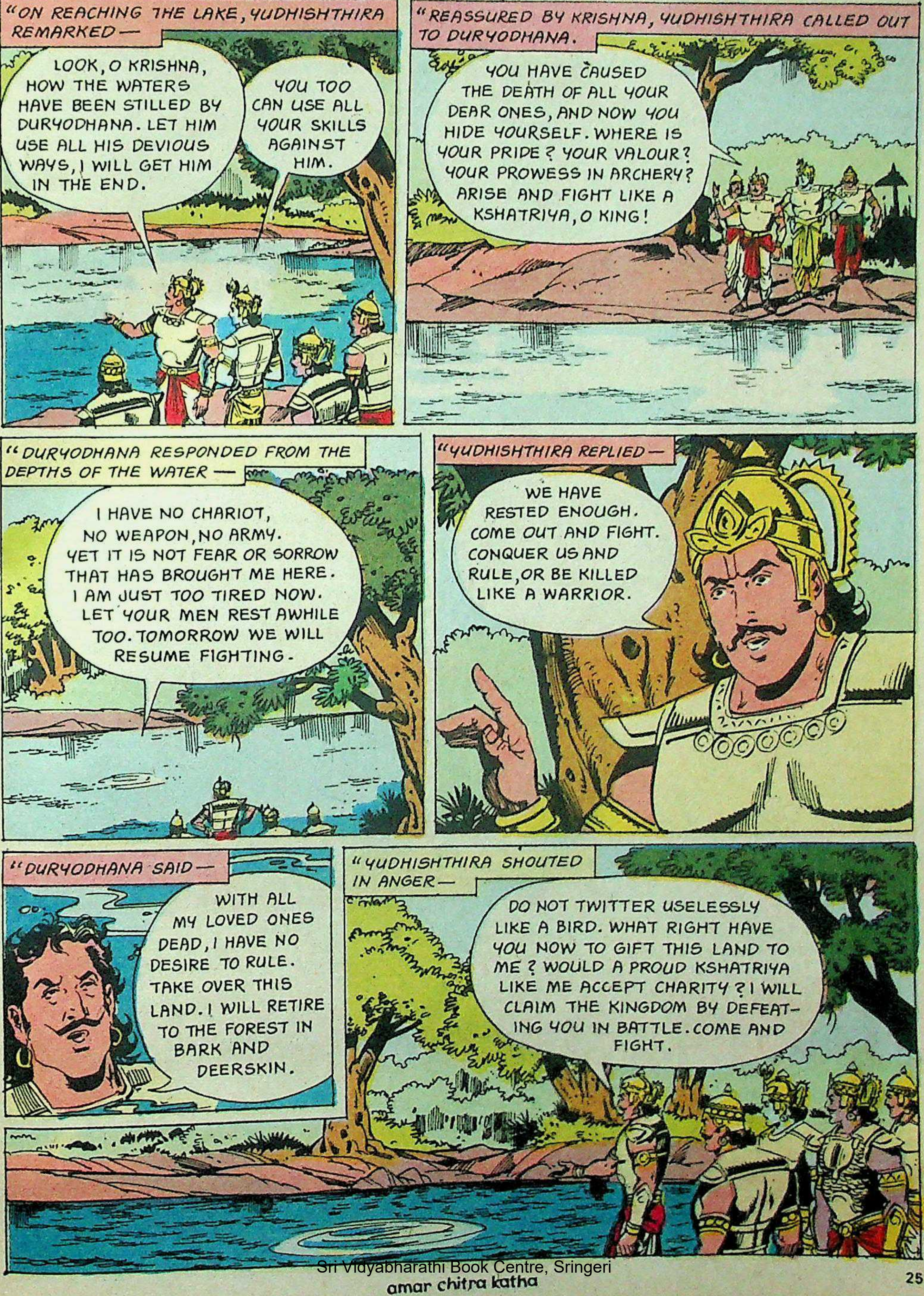


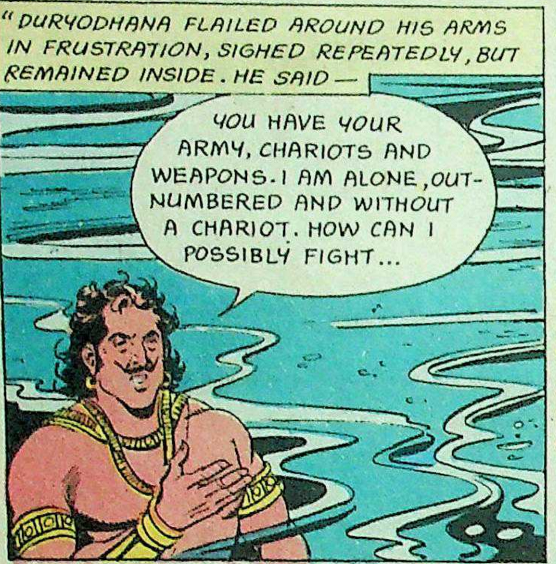
"WHEN THE SOUND OF APPROACHING ARMY REACHED THEIR EARS, ASHWATTHAMA, KRIPA AND KRITAVARMA TOLD DURYODHANA—

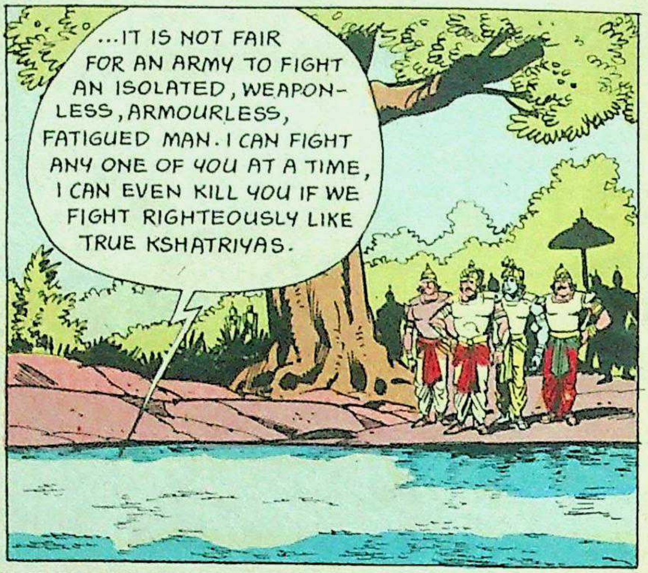

THE VICTORIOUS PANDAVAS APPEAR TO BE COMING HERE. ALLOW US TO GO, O KING.
AS YOU WISH.

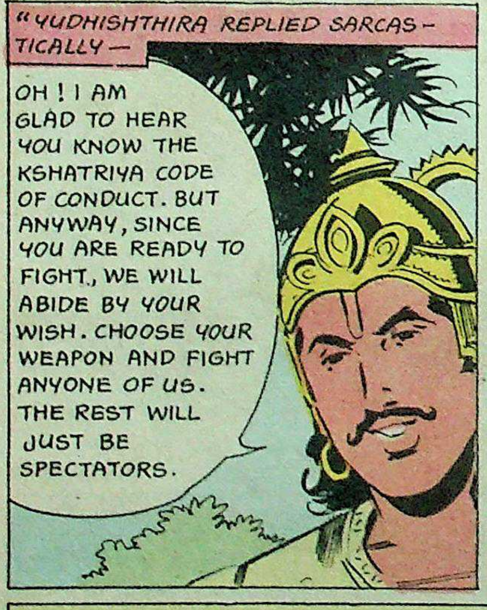
"THE THREE WARRIORS MOVED AWAY AND RESTED UNDER A BANYAN TREE.

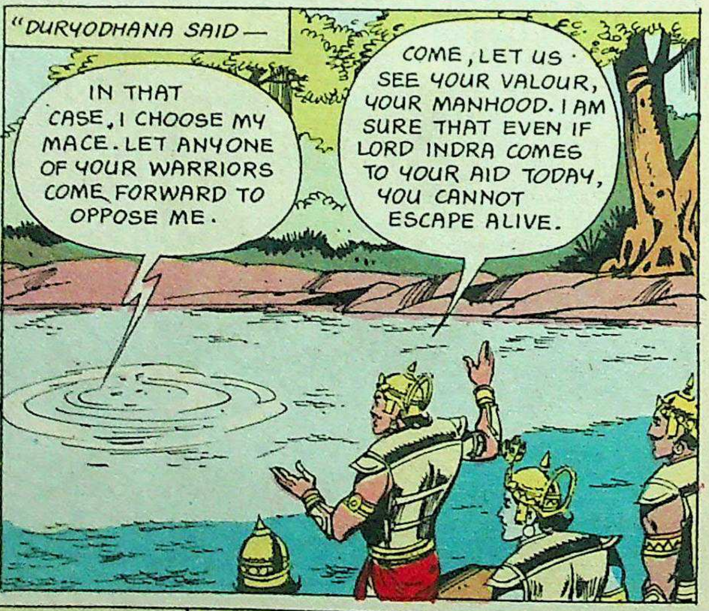

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO DURYODHANA NOW? WHAT WILL THE PANDAVAS DO, I WONDER.

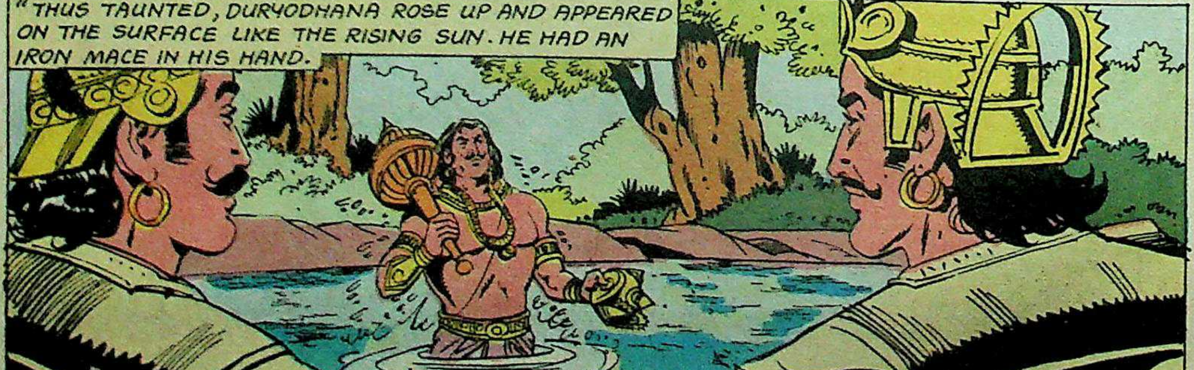

"ON REACHING THE LAKE, YUDHISHTHIRA REMARKED —
LOOK, O KRISHNA, HOW THE WATERS HAVE BEEN STILLED BY DURYODHANA. LET HIM USE ALL HIS DEVIOUS WAYS, I WILL GET HIM IN THE END.
YOU TOO CAN USE ALL YOUR SKILLS AGAINST HIM.
"REASSURED BY KRISHNA, YUDHISHTHIRA CALLED OUT TO DURYODHANA.
YOU HAVE CAUSED THE DEATH OF ALL YOUR DEAR ONES, AND NOW YOU HIDE YOURSELF. WHERE IS YOUR PRIDE? YOUR VALOUR? YOUR PROWESS IN ARCHERY? ARISE AND FIGHT LIKE A KSHATRIYA, O KING!
"DURYODHANA RESPONDED FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE WATER —
I HAVE NO CHARIOT, NO WEAPON, NO ARMY. YET IT IS NOT FEAR OR SORROW THAT HAS BROUGHT ME HERE. I AM JUST TOO TIRED NOW. LET YOUR MEN REST AWHILE TOO. TOMORROW WE WILL RESUME FIGHTING.
"YUDHISHTHIRA REPLIED —
WE HAVE RESTED ENOUGH. COME OUT AND FIGHT. CONQUER US AND RULE, OR BE KILLED LIKE A WARRIOR.
"DURYODHANA SAID —
WITH ALL MY LOVED ONES DEAD, I HAVE NO DESIRE TO RULE. TAKE OVER THIS LAND. I WILL RETIRE TO THE FOREST IN BARK AND DEERSKIN.
"YUDHISHTHIRA SHOUTED IN ANGER —
DO NOT TWITTER USELESSLY LIKE A BIRD. WHAT RIGHT HAVE YOU NOW TO GIFT THIS LAND TO ME? WOULD A PROUD KSHATRIYA LIKE ME ACCEPT CHARITY? I WILL CLAIM THE KINGDOM BY DEFEATING YOU IN BATTLE. COME AND FIGHT.

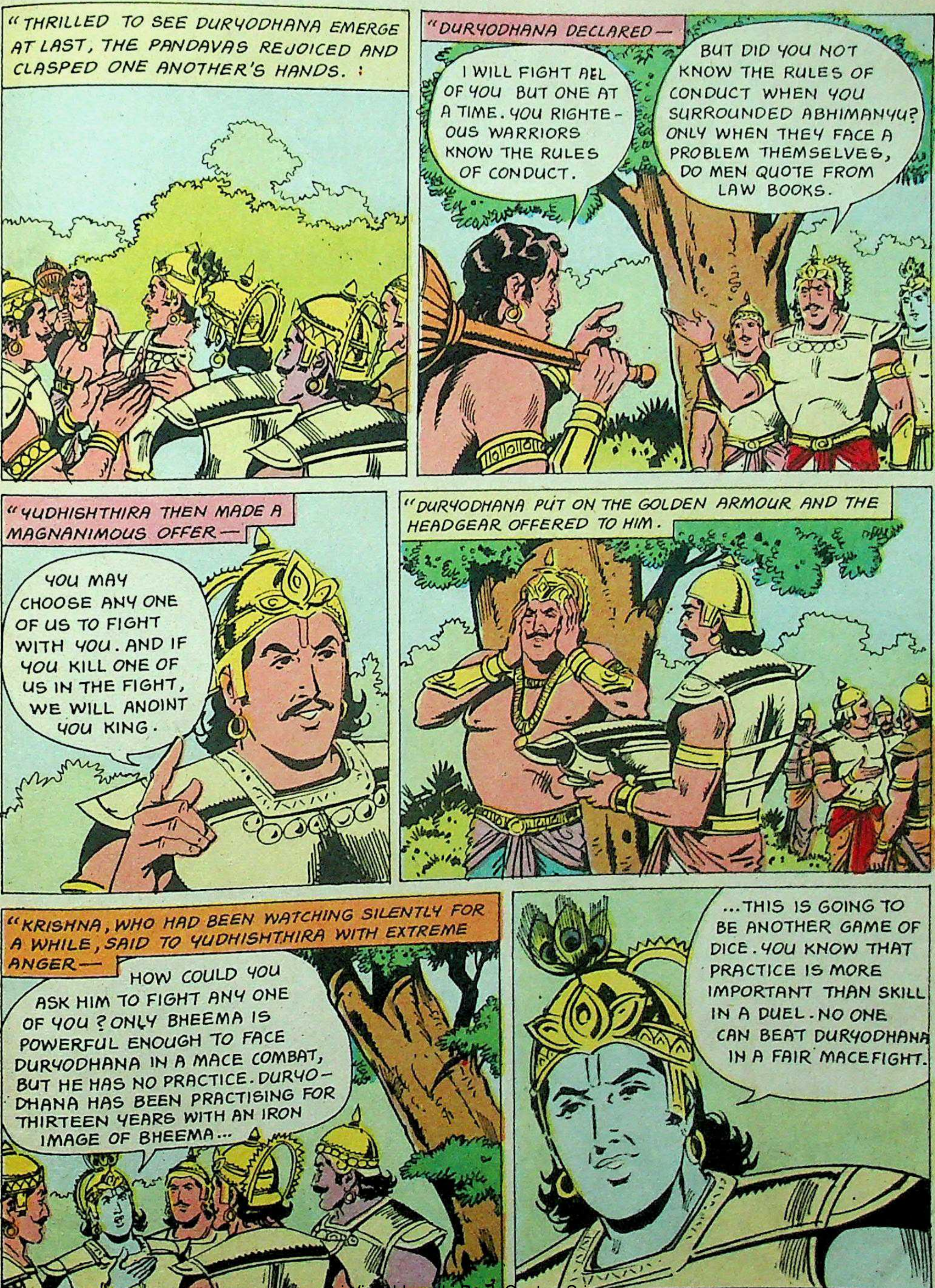

"DURYODHANA FLAILED AROUND HIS ARMS IN FRUSTRATION, SIGHED REPEATEDLY, BUT REMAINED INSIDE. HE SAID —
YOU HAVE YOUR ARMY, CHARIOTS AND WEAPONS. I AM ALONE, OUTNUMBERED AND WITHOUT A CHARIOT. HOW CAN I POSSIBLY FIGHT...

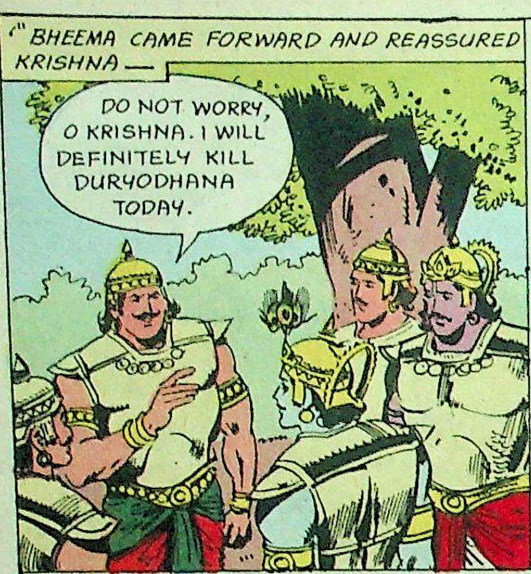

...IT IS NOT FAIR FOR AN ARMY TO FIGHT AN ISOLATED, WEAPONLESS, ARMOURLESS, FATIGUED MAN. I CAN FIGHT ANY ONE OF YOU AT A TIME, I CAN EVEN KILL YOU IF WE FIGHT RIGHTEOUSLY LIKE TRUE KSHATRIYAS.

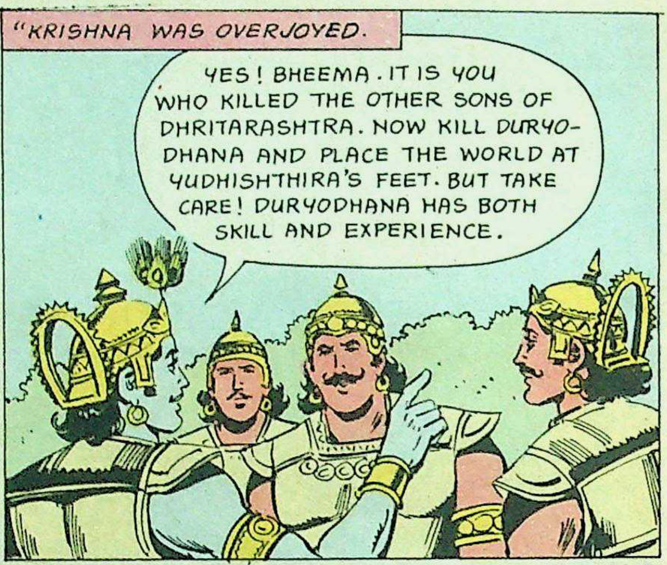

"YUDHISHTHIRA REPLIED SARCASTICALLY —
OH! I AM GLAD TO HEAR YOU KNOW THE KSHATRIYA CODE OF CONDUCT. BUT ANYWAY, SINCE YOU ARE READY TO FIGHT, WE WILL ABIDE BY YOUR WISH. CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON AND FIGHT ANYONE OF US. THE REST WILL JUST BE SPECTATORS.

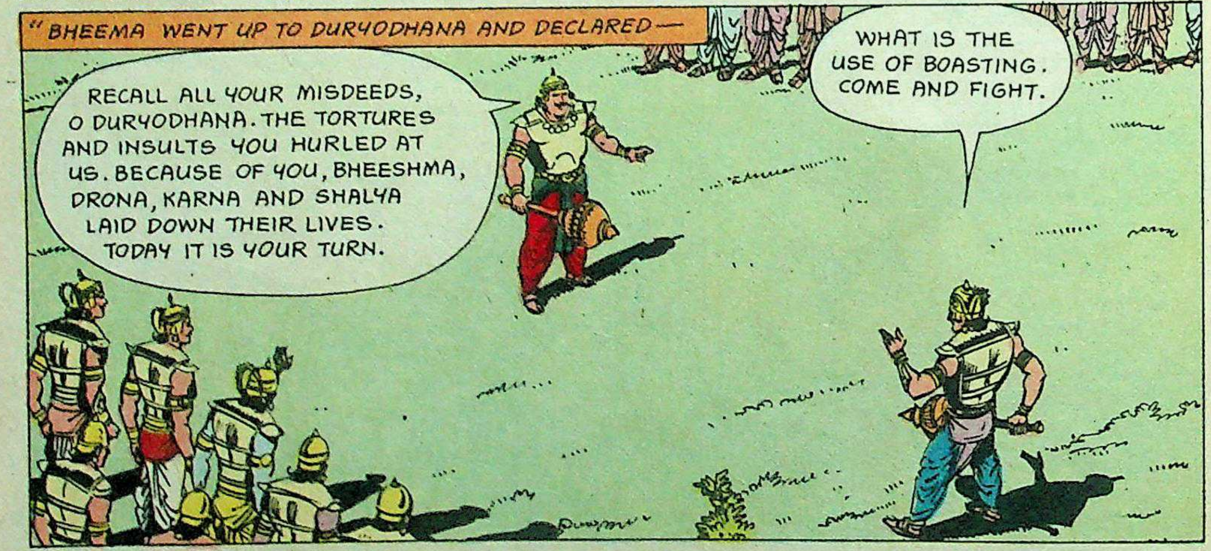

"DURYODHANA SAID —
IN THAT CASE, I CHOOSE MY MACE. LET ANYONE OF YOUR WARRIORS COME FORWARD TO OPPOSE ME.
COME, LET US SEE YOUR VALOUR, YOUR MANHOOD. I AM SURE THAT EVEN IF LORD INDRA COMES TO YOUR AID TODAY, YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ALIVE.

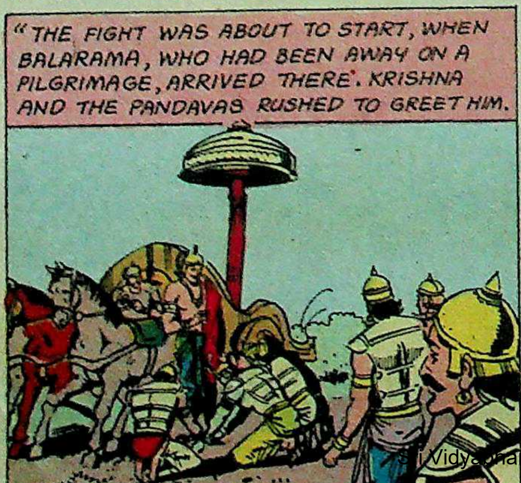

"THUS TAUNTED, DURYODHANA ROSE UP AND APPEARED ON THE SURFACE LIKE THE RISING SUN. HE HAD AN IRON MACE IN HIS HAND.

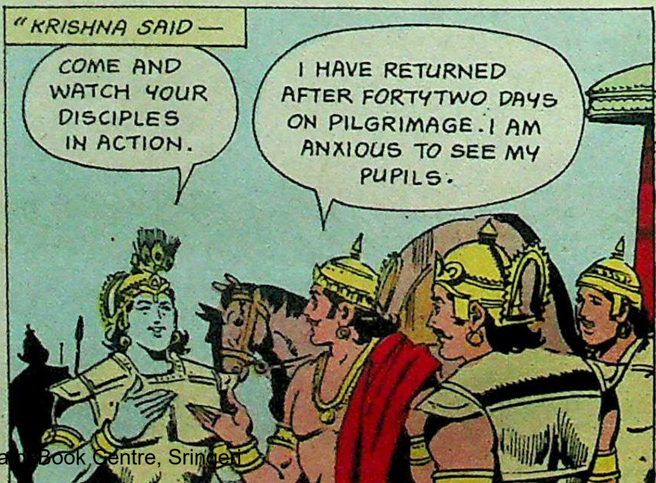

"THRILLED TO SEE DURYODHANA EMERGE AT LAST, THE PANDAVAS REJOICED AND CLASPED ONE ANOTHER'S HANDS.
"DURYODHANA DECLARED—
I WILL FIGHT ALL OF YOU BUT ONE AT A TIME. YOU RIGHTEOUS WARRIORS KNOW THE RULES OF CONDUCT.
BUT DID YOU NOT KNOW THE RULES OF CONDUCT WHEN YOU SURROUNDED ABHIMANYU? ONLY WHEN THEY FACE A PROBLEM THEMSELVES, DO MEN QUOTE FROM LAW BOOKS.
"YUDHISHTHIRA THEN MADE A MAGNANIMOUS OFFER—
YOU MAY CHOOSE ANY ONE OF US TO FIGHT WITH YOU. AND IF YOU KILL ONE OF US IN THE FIGHT, WE WILL ANOINT YOU KING.
"DURYODHANA PUT ON THE GOLDEN ARMOUR AND THE HEADGEAR OFFERED TO HIM.
"KRISHNA, WHO HAD BEEN WATCHING SILENTLY FOR A WHILE, SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA WITH EXTREME ANGER—
HOW COULD YOU ASK HIM TO FIGHT ANY ONE OF YOU? ONLY BHEEMA IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO FACE DURYODHANA IN A MACE COMBAT, BUT HE HAS NO PRACTICE. DURYODHANA HAS BEEN PRACTISING FOR THIRTEEN YEARS WITH AN IRON IMAGE OF BHEEMA...
...THIS IS GOING TO BE ANOTHER GAME OF DICE. YOU KNOW THAT PRACTICE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SKILL IN A DUEL. NO ONE CAN BEAT DURYODHANA IN A FAIR MACEFIGHT.


"BHEEMA CAME FORWARD AND REASSURED KRISHNA —
DO NOT WORRY, O KRISHNA. I WILL DEFINITELY KILL DURYODHANA TODAY.

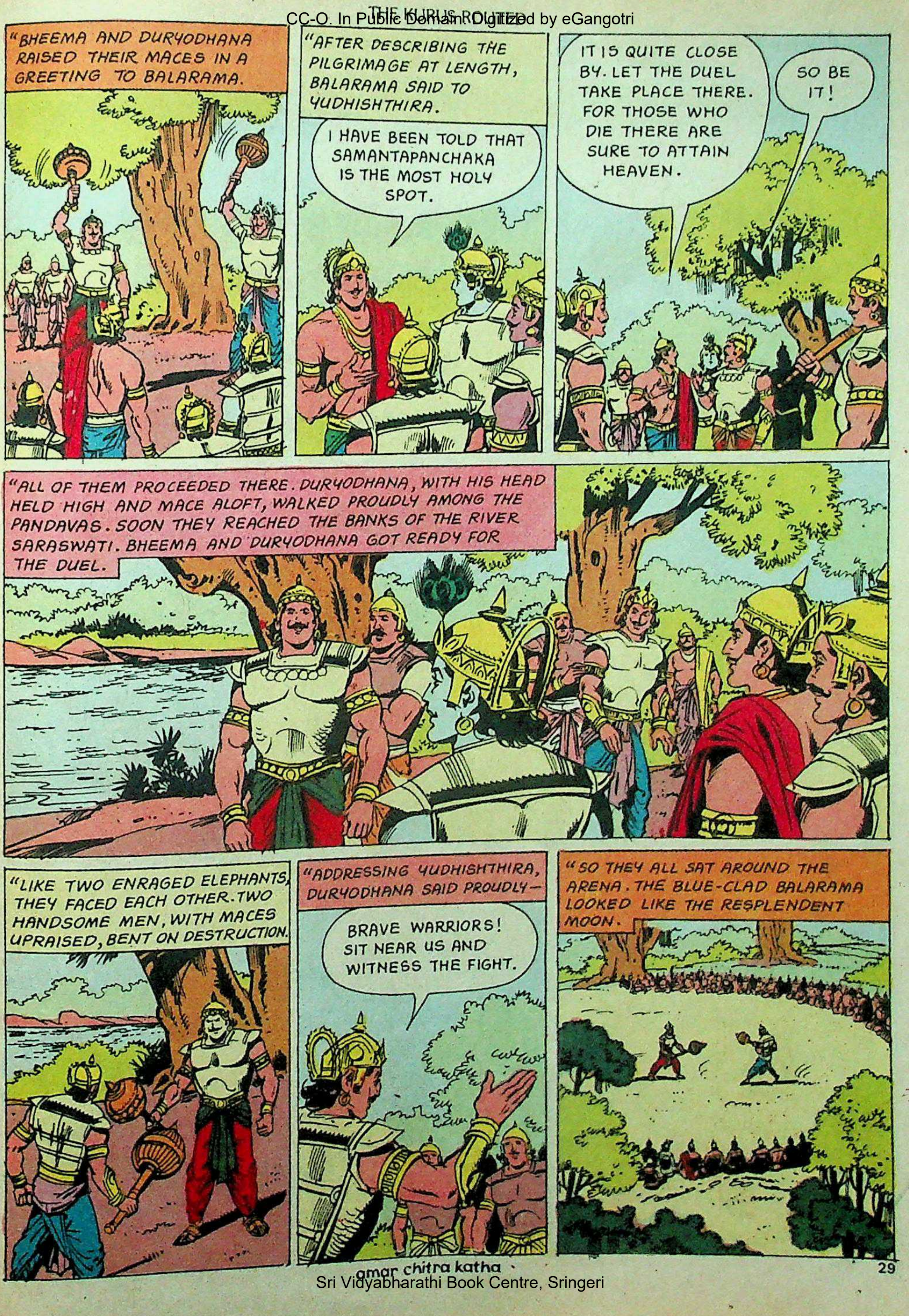

"KRISHNA WAS OVERJOYED.
YES! BHEEMA. IT IS YOU WHO KILLED THE OTHER SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA. NOW KILL DURYODHANA AND PLACE THE WORLD AT YUDHISHTHIRA'S FEET. BUT TAKE CARE! DURYODHANA HAS BOTH SKILL AND EXPERIENCE.

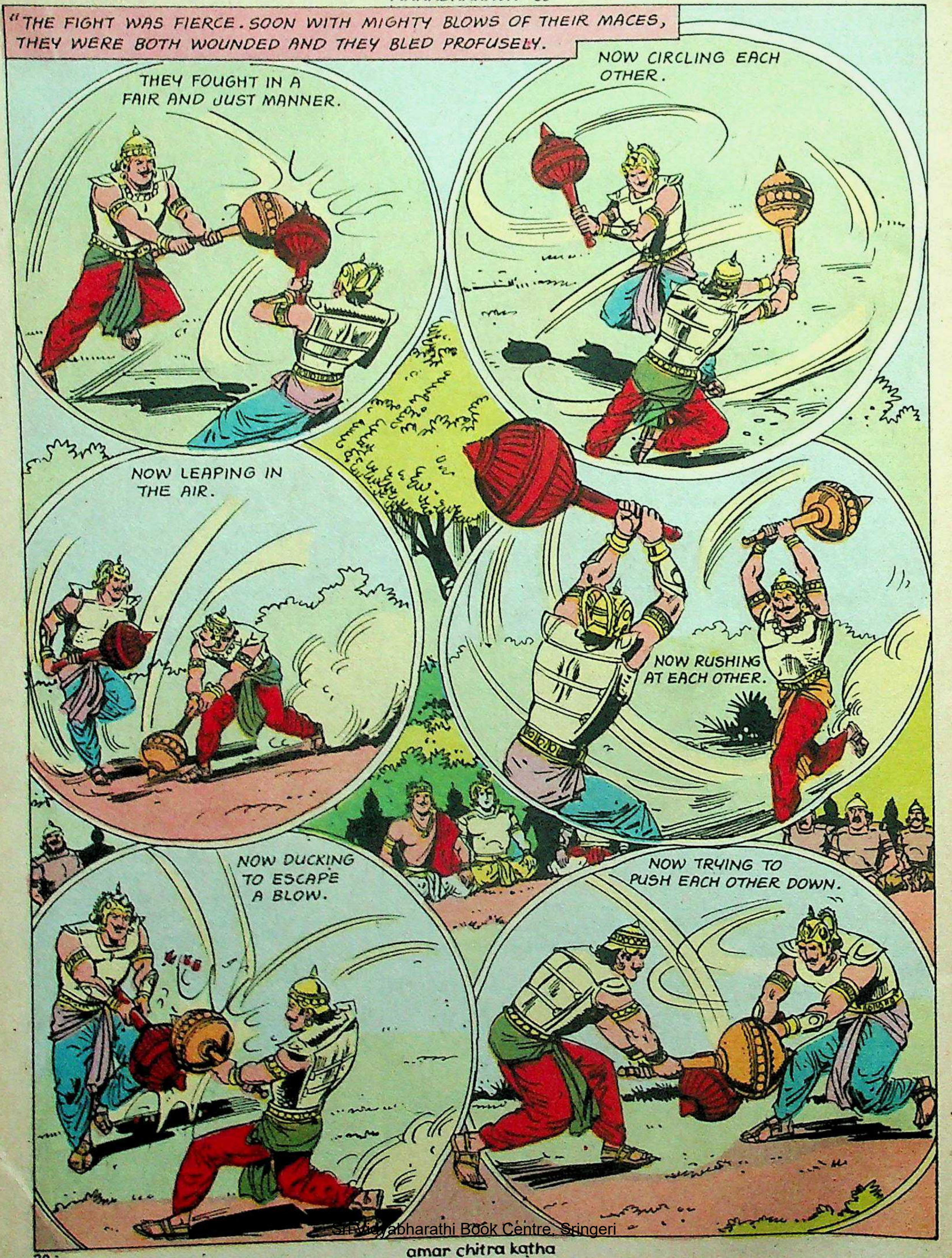

"BHEEMA WENT UP TO DURYODHANA AND DECLARED —
RECALL ALL YOUR MISDEEDS, O DURYODHANA. THE TORTURES AND INSULTS YOU HURLED AT US. BECAUSE OF YOU, BHEESHMA, DRONA, KARNA AND SHALYA LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES. TODAY IT IS YOUR TURN.
WHAT IS THE USE OF BOASTING. COME AND FIGHT.

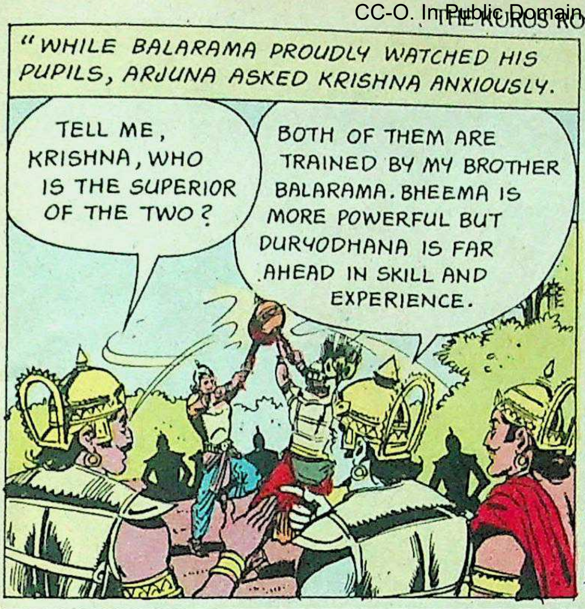

"THE FIGHT WAS ABOUT TO START, WHEN BALARAMA, WHO HAD BEEN AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE, ARRIVED THERE. KRISHNA AND THE PANDAVAS RUSHED TO GREET HIM.


"KRISHNA SAID —
COME AND WATCH YOUR DISCIPLES IN ACTION.
I HAVE RETURNED AFTER FORTYTWO DAYS ON PILGRIMAGE. I AM ANXIOUS TO SEE MY PUPILS.

Sri Vidyadharana Book Centre, Sringeri

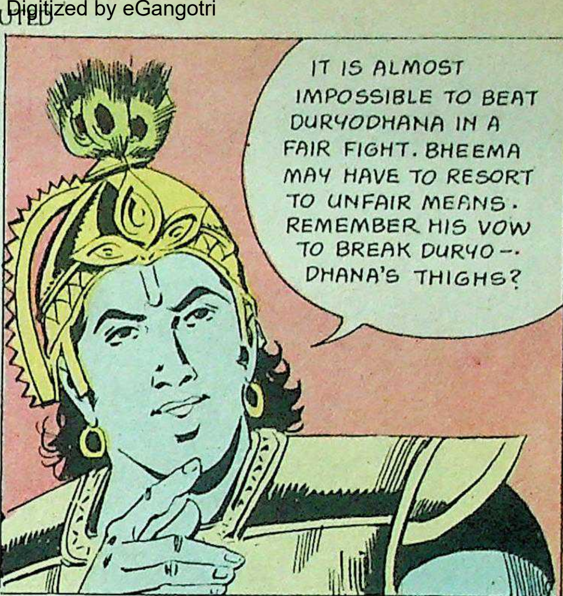

"BHEEMA AND DURYODHANA RAISED THEIR MACES IN A GREETING TO BALARAMA.
"AFTER DESCRIBING THE PILGRIMAGE AT LENGTH, BALARAMA SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA.
I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT SAMANTAPANCHAKA IS THE MOST HOLY SPOT.
IT IS QUITE CLOSE BY. LET THE DUEL TAKE PLACE THERE. FOR THOSE WHO DIE THERE ARE SURE TO ATTAIN HEAVEN.
SO BE IT!
"ALL OF THEM PROCEEDED THERE. DURYODHANA, WITH HIS HEAD HELD HIGH AND MACE ALOFT, WALKED PROUDLY AMONG THE PANDAVAS. SOON THEY REACHED THE BANKS OF THE RIVER SARASWATI. BHEEMA AND DURYODHANA GOT READY FOR THE DUEL.
"LIKE TWO ENRAGED ELEPHANTS, THEY FACED EACH OTHER. TWO HANDSOME MEN, WITH MACES UPRAISED, BENT ON DESTRUCTION.
"ADDRESSING YUDHISHTHIRA, DURYODHANA SAID PROUDLY—
BRAVE WARRIORS! SIT NEAR US AND WITNESS THE FIGHT.
"SO THEY ALL SAT AROUND THE ARENA. THE BLUE-CLAD BALARAMA LOOKED LIKE THE RESPLENDENT MOON.


"THE FIGHT WAS FIERCE. SOON WITH MIGHTY BLOWS OF THEIR MACES, THEY WERE BOTH WOUNDED AND THEY BLED PROFUSELY.
THEY FOUGHT IN A FAIR AND JUST MANNER.
NOW CIRCLING EACH OTHER.
NOW LEAPING IN THE AIR.
NOW RUSHING AT EACH OTHER.
NOW DUCKING TO ESCAPE A BLOW.
NOW TRYING TO PUSH EACH OTHER DOWN.

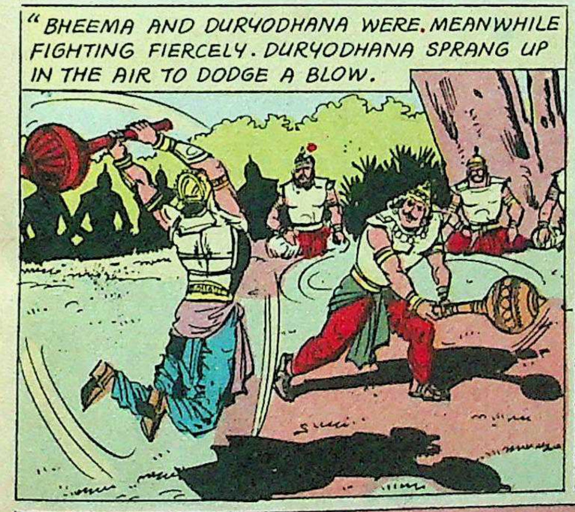


"WHILE BALARAMA PROUDLY WATCHED HIS PUPILS, ARJUNA ASKED KRISHNA ANXIOUSLY.

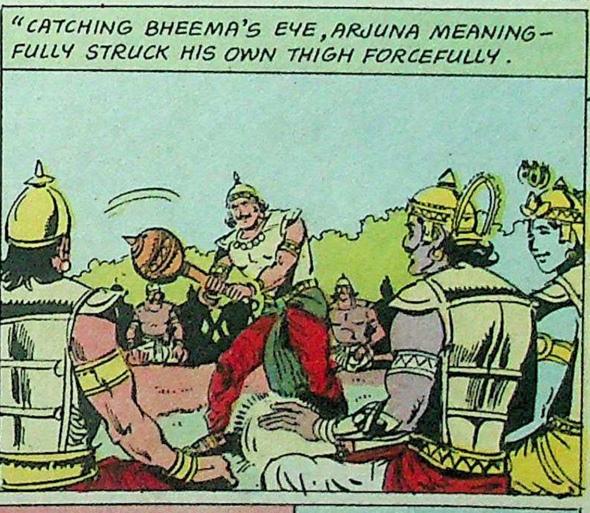
TELL ME, KRISHNA, WHO IS THE SUPERIOR OF THE TWO?
BOTH OF THEM ARE TRAINED BY MY BROTHER BALARAMA. BHEEMA IS MORE POWERFUL BUT DURYODHANA IS FAR AHEAD IN SKILL AND EXPERIENCE.



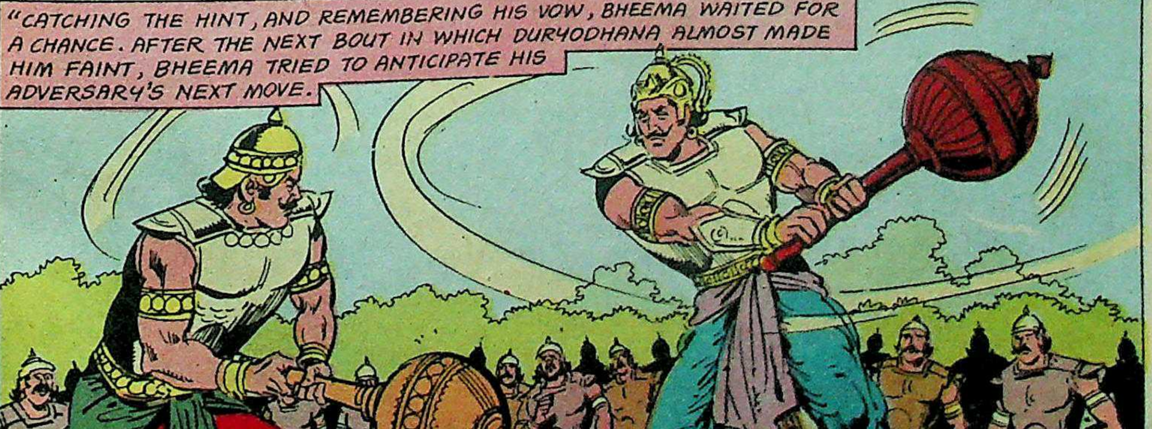
IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO BEAT DURYODHANA IN A FAIR FIGHT. BHEEMA MAY HAVE TO RESORT TO UNFAIR MEANS. REMEMBER HIS VOW TO BREAK DURYODHANA'S THIGHS?



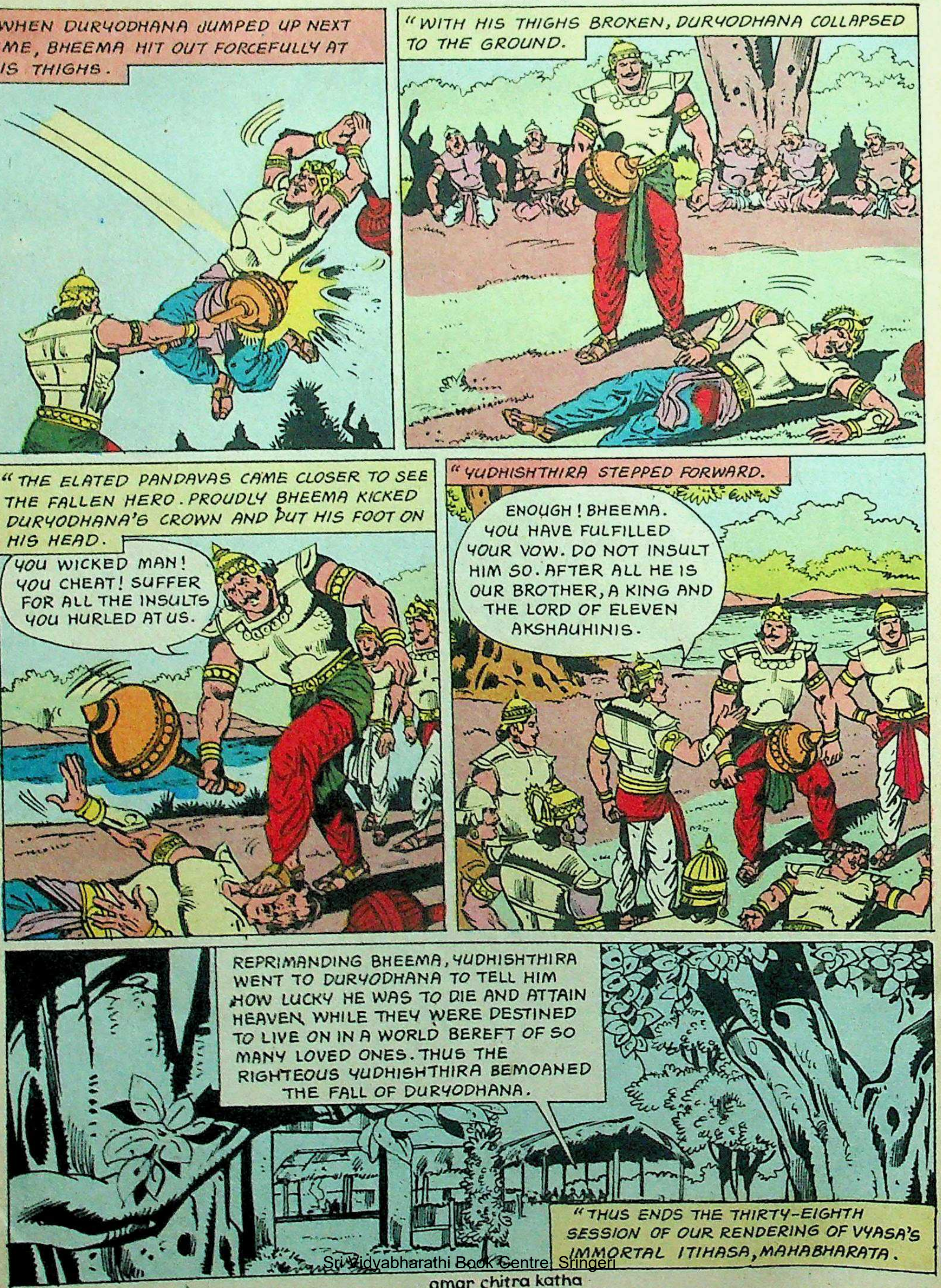
"BHEEMA AND DURYODHANA WERE MEANWHILE FIGHTING FIERCELY. DURYODHANA SPRANG UP IN THE AIR TO DODGE A BLOW.



"CATCHING BHEEMA'S EYE, ARJUNA MEANINGFULLY STRUCK HIS OWN THIGH FORCEFULLY.



"CATCHING THE HINT, AND REMEMBERING HIS VOW, BHEEMA WAITED FOR A CHANCE. AFTER THE NEXT BOUT IN WHICH DURYODHANA ALMOST MADE HIM FAINT, BHEEMA TRIED TO ANTICIPATE HIS ADVERSARY'S NEXT MOVE.


"WHEN DURYODHANA JUMPED UP NEXT TIME, BHEEMA HIT OUT FORCEFULLY AT HIS THIGHS.
"WITH HIS THIGHS BROKEN, DURYODHANA COLLAPSED TO THE GROUND.
"THE ELATED PANDAVAS CAME CLOSER TO SEE THE FALLEN HERO. PROUDLY BHEEMA KICKED DURYODHANA'S CROWN AND PUT HIS FOOT ON HIS HEAD.
YOU WICKED MAN! YOU CHEAT! SUFFER FOR ALL THE INSULTS YOU HURLED AT US.
"YUDHISHTHIRA STEPPED FORWARD.
ENOUGH! BHEEMA. YOU HAVE FULFILLED YOUR VOW. DO NOT INSULT HIM SO. AFTER ALL HE IS OUR BROTHER, A KING AND THE LORD OF ELEVEN AKSHAUHINIS.
REPRIMANDING BHEEMA, YUDHISHTHIRA WENT TO DURYODHANA TO TELL HIM HOW LUCKY HE WAS TO DIE AND ATTAIN HEAVEN, WHILE THEY WERE DESTINED TO LIVE ON IN A WORLD BEREFT OF SO MANY LOVED ONES. THUS THE RIGHTEOUS YUDHISHTHIRA BEMOANED THE FALL OF DURYODHANA.
"THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA, MAHABHARATA.

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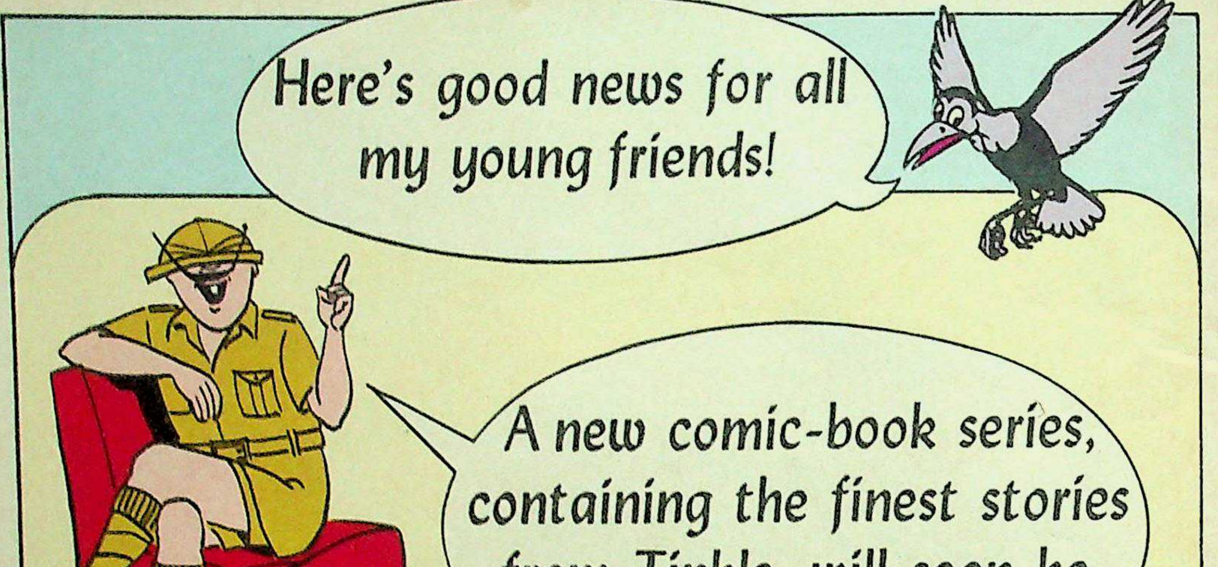
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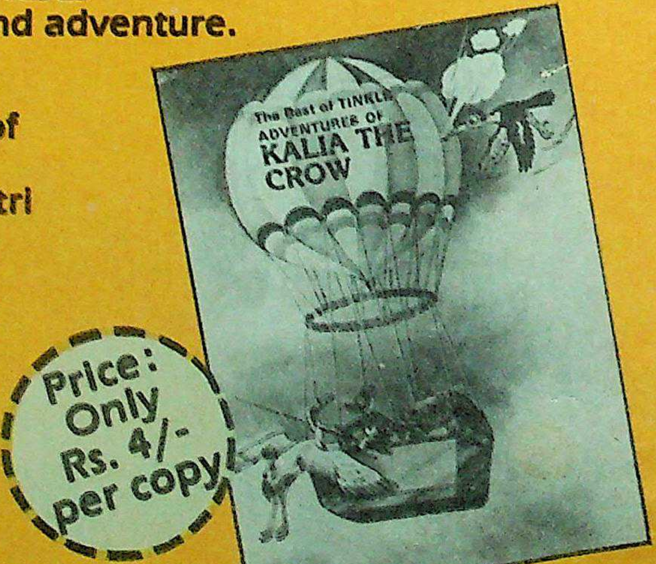
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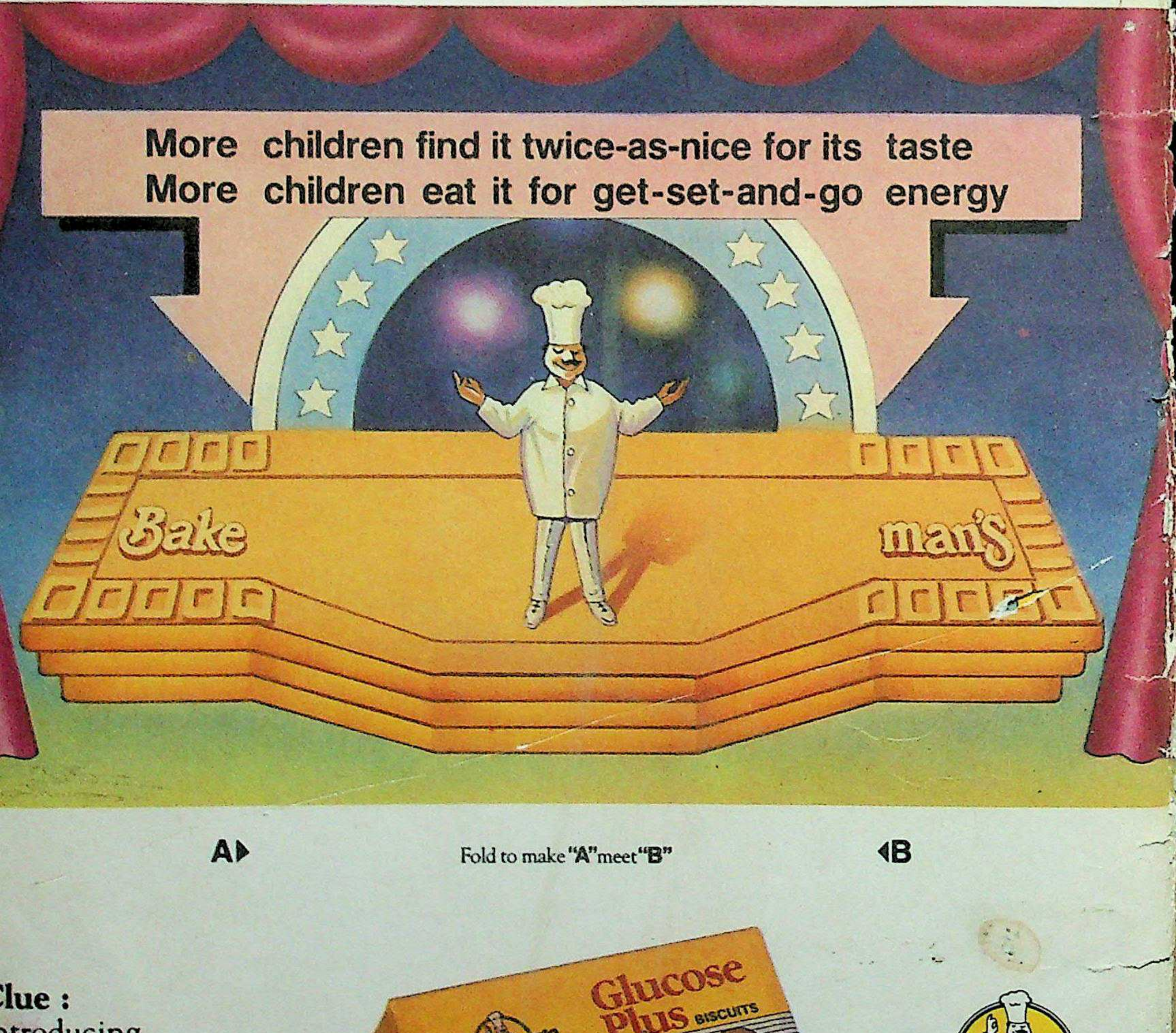
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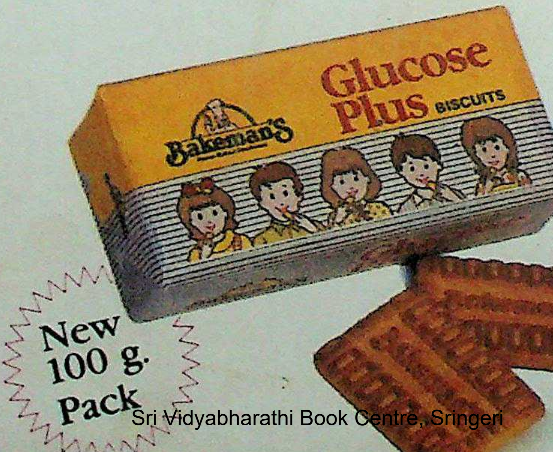
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